

A  
BOOK OF MODERN  
ENGLISH PROSE





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SELECTED AND ANNOTATED

BY

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## PREFACE

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The question is sometimes discussed whether Indian school-boys and students should be taught the English language or English literature. It is hoped that this volume of selections will demonstrate that the two aims are not necessarily incompatible. There are books which may fairly be classed as English literature, the language of which is not remote from the language spoken and written by English people.

The volume is intended as a general English Reader for Indian boys and girls at the High School or Matriculation stage. One aim that has been steadily kept in view is that the passages selected should make their own appeal, and should be such that school pupils will read them for their own sake, not as a task but for pleasure. Accordingly the pieces chosen deal largely in the concrete, and in a number of cases have a large element of adventure and exalt the heroic virtues. One or two passages have been introduced to illustrate different types of English humour. Especially in India there is a demand for selections with a morally didactic bearing. It is hoped that in the pieces chosen in response to this demand the pill has been sufficiently gilded.

The large proportion of copyright passages is a sufficient guarantee that the selections represent the English of to-day; while the authors' names are a testimony to the quality of the English. The passages are to some extent graded, with

the simpler pieces at the beginning. None of the passages chosen were written specially for use in school-books: great care has been taken to explain in the Notes words, phrases, or references that might puzzle a school pupil or an inexperienced teacher.

A long experience of correcting the written work of Indian schoolboys and College students convinces me that their attention has never been effectively called to some of the mistakes which disfigure their examination papers and which recur with such pathetic regularity. Some hints on this subject are given in an Appendix.

J. F. McFADYEN.

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# MODERN ENGLISH PROSE

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Mrs. Laurence Binyon

The life story of Palissy is taken from Book II of Mrs. Laurence Binyon's *Paths of Peace*. The authoress wrote this book after the Great War. She wanted her readers to realize that such wars, with the horrors that attend them, do not truly represent the forward march of mankind. In her own words her object was "to direct our thoughts out of the dark valley of war (and the hatred that makes war possible) into the paths of peace". There are heroes of peace as well as heroes of war. The story of some of the noblest of these is graphically told in *Paths of Peace*.

## PALISSY

Pots! Not flower-pots only, but all sorts of things made of earth and baked. Of course it is the best fun in the world, if you can get hold of some nice clay and squeeze and pinch and smooth it into shape, and then try if you can bake it in the oven, or just among the hottest coals in the fire, into firmness and lastingness. True, it never does last long. However beautiful it may look in the beginning, it generally ends by cracking. Still you hope, and try again. And because we have all made our clay pots, and know what it feels like, I thought you would like the story of a potter who tried very often and very hard, and succeeded at last.

He was a Frenchman, and his name was Bernard Palissy.

He was born in the year 1510, at a town in the south of France. His father was a glass-blower,<sup>1</sup> a very poor man. He had no money to spare for the education of his little boy, but Bernard was clever and quick at learning, and managed to pick up reading and writing.

Of course he was taught his father's trade: how to draw, so that he could design patterns for the glass, and how to grind the colours, and mix them, and paint with them. He drew cleverly. The little sketches he made of his neighbours always sold well. People came to have their portraits painted, and he found this more profitable than the glass work, for which there was no great demand.

Before he settled down to practise his trade, therefore, he determined to see the world, and to pay for his travels with his pencil, since people in all parts of France cared equally for pleasant pictures of themselves. For several years he enjoyed a roaming life, and learnt a great deal. He went east to Antwerp,<sup>2</sup> and far west to Brest.<sup>3</sup> He wandered in the Ardennes,<sup>4</sup> and in the Pyrenees,<sup>5</sup> and all through France.

All the time he was learning things which were to be very useful to him later on. He made notes on the different soils in different parts of the country, and we know that he paid great attention to the church windows, studying the differences in the glass in certain districts, and noting the corroded<sup>6</sup> surface it showed in Poitou<sup>7</sup> and Brittany.<sup>8</sup>

Then one day he married, ceased wandering about, and settled down in a quaint old town called Saintes. He was very happy there with his wife and their babies, and they might have gone on being happy and useful, and quite unknown to fame, if something had not happened.

A great lord who lived near the town sent one day for Palissy, to come to his castle and do some work for him. Palissy went. In the castle was a collection of old pottery of all sorts and ages, and these were shown to him. He admired and praised them with understanding. Then their



owner took from a special cabinet an earthen cup covered and decorated with enamel, a cup so beautiful that when Palissy saw it, he could not speak for pleasure. He was not a potter. He did not understand the handling of clay. He knew that the secret of how to make enamel had been lost, and that there was no one to teach it to him. But he made up his mind, there and then, that he would re-invent it. He would never rest or slacken till he could make things as beautiful as the enamel cup. It had been done once, and so it could be done again. He would do it.

He went home and told his wife. She was not pleased. You see, he told her what it meant. It meant that instead of earning money, and having a comfortable home, and being able to buy what she liked for her children, they would be very poor for a long time. She was proud of his drawings, and he wished now to give up drawing; and it is hard for a mother to look at her babies and agree to stint<sup>9</sup> them. In the end Bernard might fail to find the enamel. She felt it was not worth the risk. Still, when he urged her, she agreed.

He began work.

At first he did not in the least know what enamel was made of. He could only guess. He chose out various things that seemed to him likely, and ground them to powder. Then he bought a lot of earthen pots and broke them to bits. Then he built his furnace, lit the fire, and put in the broken potsherds<sup>10</sup> to bake.

What happened?

Well, at first those things happened which we all know by experience. The fire went wrong. Palissy (like us) did not know how hot a fire was needed to make his painted powder melt and become enamel. Sometimes he made it too hot, sometimes too cold. At other times he arranged his pieces so that the heat did not strike them evenly. He had to find out everything for himself through the mistakes he made.

The pots cost money, and so did the powders; and the wood for the furnace cost a great deal of money, for it was dear, and in that part of France there was no coal to be had. His wife grew sad, and his children grew thin, and they all grew poorer and poorer. Several years went by, but he went on trying.

At last he was forced by poverty to stop his experiments, and give a little time to work that brought in money. But the moment he had saved enough to buy new materials, back he went to his pots again. The first thing he did this time must have seemed very wasteful to the poor wife. "I broke," he says, "about three dozen pots, all of them new!" These he painted in the same way, and carried off to a friend of his who had a glass furnace,<sup>11</sup> the heat of which was very fierce.

The result was encouraging, and he went on making trials of the same sort with a little more hope in his heart. Again and again he failed. Year after year he bought pots and broke them. He bought drugs and pounded and mixed them. He fired his broken pots, and watched for the result. And the result was never success.

Then, one day, when ten years had passed in experiment, and he seemed no nearer to the goal, he made up his mind that there must be an end to this. He would make one last attempt. If nothing came of that, then he would give it up for ever. He had lost enough time and money, his family had suffered enough. If he failed this last time, the glory of discovering the enamel must be for another man, and not for him.

For the last time, then, Palissy broke his pots and painted them. More than three hundred different mixtures were put on these pieces. They were taken to the glass furnace. Palissy waited.

Now the fixed time is up. The furnace is opened, a great glow of light pours out. One of the potsherds looks different

from anything he has yet had. He can tell nothing till it cools. But as it cools he sees it hardening, and as it hardens it grows whiter—whiter still—smooth, polished, dazzling. A white enamel, "singularly beautiful".

There was no more talk of giving up now. Success had come. But there was still much for Palissy to do before he could make beautiful enamel-ware like the cup that had first inspired him. He must work in private now, and he must have his own furnace, of which he could have the complete control. And for the furnace there was no money at all.

Bricks he managed to get somehow, but he could not pay for the cart to bring them to his house. He had to fetch them himself, carrying them in a basket on his back. He could not pay a man to make his furnace for him. That, too, he must do himself from beginning to end. But he saw before him a vision of the beautiful enamel, and he cared for nothing at all if he could realize his dream.

He made and baked his pots, and coated them with the successful mixture. Then the furnace must be heated, and a very great heat secured. It is done. The fire roars at white heat. The cups are arranged, carefully placed in the centre of the glow. Now, what he has to wait for is the melting of the mixture, which ought to flow evenly over his cups, coating them with brilliant white enamel. All day, all night he feeds the fire. In the morning his boy, Nicholas, brings him a bowl of porridge<sup>12</sup> for breakfast. How tired the poor father looks!

"Thank you, my son," he says. "To-morrow we will take holiday together."

"But, Father, who will mind the furnace?"

"To-morrow its work will have been done."

But to-morrow comes and passes, and more time and more heat is still needed. And now a terrible thing is happening. The stock of wood is running low. What can be done? Palissy has no money left, and no one will lend him any more. If he lets the fire slacken and die down, all his past work will

be wasted. He rushes out into the garden, and begins to tear up the wooden palings. Into the fire they go, bit by bit, and the fire eats them up.

The last is devoured, and the enamel has not melted. Twenty minutes—ten minutes—five more may be all that is needed. Palissy dashes to the house, and bursts into the little sitting-room, where his poor wife, who no longer believes in him and his fine fancies, sits among the children. He seizes the table, and is gone.

Back he comes for a chair—then another.

The room is empty of furniture now.

*And the enamel has not melted.*

There is one chance left—he will tear up the floor. His wife shrieks, but he does not stop for that. Up it comes, plank by plank, and is borne away to the furnace. More! More!

*And the enamel melts!*

He did it at last! He cared enough to go on through every difficulty and disappointment, and in the end he succeeded. He tells us how little sympathy he met with. He says: "I suffered an anguish that I cannot speak, for I was quite exhausted and dried up by the heat of the furnace; it was more than a month since my shirt had been dry upon me. Further to console me, I was the object of mocking, and even those from whom solace was due, ran crying through the town that I was burning my floors! And in this way my credit was taken from me, and I was regarded as a madman. . . . When I had dwelt with my regrets a little, because there was no one who had pity upon me, I said to my soul: 'Wherefore art thou saddened, since thou hast found the object of thy search? Labour now, and the defamers will live to be ashamed.'"

And so it happened. Palissy became prosperous and famous; so famous that when persecution broke out in France, and as a Huguenot<sup>13</sup> his life was threatened, he was saved by his pottery. His workshop was stormed, and he was thrown

into prison. But the Queen Mother of France was appealed to, and she rescued him. So great an artist could not be allowed to die. He must live to do more beautiful work for his country.

So he was made Potter to the King, and went to live in Paris. There he lived and worked till he was a very old man.

It took him sixteen years to perfect himself in the making of his enamel, and to the end of his life he went on trying to improve his work and making fresh discoveries about it. He took a great deal of trouble about his designs. He had a great passion for nature, and the ornaments he loved best to put on his dishes were taken from the common objects of his own countryside: flowers and fruit, leaves and berries, birds, fishes and shells. You will find all these in Palissy-ware, all true to life, and all taken from what he had himself seen in different parts of France.

He did not use many colours in his enamel. Golden yellow, a deep violet blue, green, and the brown of the newly turned-up earth: beyond these he did not go. But with these he made his wonderful pottery, though nothing was so wonderful as the devotion he had put into the making of it.

The last four years of his life were spent in prison. Royal favour could no longer save him from this, though the King cared for him, and was anxious that he should give up his "heresy"<sup>14</sup> and save his life. But Palissy remained a Huguenot, holding his belief dearer than life. He was threatened with death at the stake, but it left him unmoved. He was eighty years old when he died, still a prisoner.

What happened to his wife we do not know for certain, but I think she was dead before these troubles happened. His secret did not die with him, for his sons carried on his art. But they had not his gift, and could only copy what he had made. And then the secret which had cost such years of labour and want was lost once again.



## NOTES

1. One who makes glass vessels by heating glass and blowing it into the required shape.
2. In Belgium.
3. In the N.W. of France.
4. A tract of hill and forest country in the N.E. of France.
5. The mountain range that divides France from Spain.
6. Worn away.
7. In the S.W. of France.
8. In the N.W. of France.
9. Keep on short allowance; partially starve.
10. Pieces of broken pots or other earthenware.
11. Furnace used by glass-blowers for melting glass.
12. A kind of pudding made with meal and hot water or milk.
13. A name given to the French Protestants.
14. A belief, especially in religious matters, contrary to the belief generally accepted. Thus in a Catholic country like France, Protestantism is a heresy.

## QUESTIONS

1. Tell the story of Palissy's work as his wife might have told it.
2. Are riches a help or a hindrance in making a man great?
3. Tell any other story of patience and perseverance leading to success.
4. If Palissy had failed to find the secret of the enamel, what would you have said about him?
5. Are there any artists in an Indian village?

## Mrs. Margaret Gatty

"The Light of Life" is one of the *Parables from Nature* (Second Series), written by Mrs. Margaret Gatty (1809-1873). A parable is in the first place a simple story of everyday events; but it is always intended to convey some lesson. The story points to some spiritual or religious truth which the reader must find out for himself.

We must not confuse a parable with a fable. Both are intended to teach lessons. But in a fable the story is one of improbable or impossible events. Animals are represented as speaking, or trees and flowers as behaving like human beings. In a parable, however, the story itself may be perfectly true; in any case, it is always a natural and possible story, though it means more than it says.

Again a parable must not be confused with an allegory. In a parable or a fable there is usually only one lesson taught. An allegory is generally a longer story, and it is in fact two stories told as one. For each person or thing mentioned represents some spiritual or moral quality, and each event described represents some spiritual or moral experience.

In "The Light of Life" the authoress herself tells the meaning of the parable. More often, as we have said, the reader has to find out the meaning for himself.

### THE LIGHT OF LIFE

"What more could have been done for it than I have done!" The cry came from an afflicted heart.

It was uttered by Hans Jansen, the Hamburg printer's only son, as he sat moaning over a dying rose tree in the corner of a little back-yard<sup>1</sup> behind his father's house.

Hans Jansen is what is commonly called "not all there"<sup>2</sup>—that is, he could not see and comprehend the things of this life as his neighbours did. More than half of what

passed around him was hidden from his eyes. He was in part, though not altogether, an idiot.

It was a great distress to his parents that this should be the case—at least it had been so once. But they had reconciled themselves to it, and learned, by degrees, to see comfort through the cloud.<sup>3</sup> If Hans was below the rest of the world in some ways, he was above them in others. The fear of God and the love of his neighbour had come almost as an instinct; at any rate without the struggles some people have to go through before their hearts are touched by either one or the other. He wouldn't have missed saying his prayers night and morning, or grace<sup>4</sup> at meals, to please an emperor; and an unkind word about anyone could never be got out of him.<sup>5</sup> Truly their Hans was ripening for a better state of existence,<sup>6</sup> whether he had any book learning or not. He had nothing to fear, but everything to hope for, from death.

And he had one passion—one special cause of enjoyment and delight. He doted on<sup>7</sup> flowers and was seldom seen without one in his button-hole all the summer through.<sup>8</sup> But this was because his good nature<sup>9</sup> had made him many friends, who took a pleasure in seeing him pleased, and gave him a nosegay<sup>10</sup> when they could. It was very well known that he had no garden of his own.

Mr. Jansen's house was a red-brick one, in a row,<sup>11</sup> with a square enclosure in front, covered with pebbles, and a square yard at the back, which had a pump in the middle, and a dog kennel<sup>12</sup> on one side. It is true this yard was covered with soil, and there were scrubby patches<sup>13</sup> of grass upon it here and there; but it was used for a drying-ground,<sup>14</sup> and had never once been brightened by flowers since the day it was first parcelled out and the walls were built round it, across which were now stretched the lines<sup>15</sup> on which the linen was hung to dry.

The fact was, Mr. Jansen had not wished for a garden. He was busy from morning to night at his printing business in the town; his wife had quite enough on her hands<sup>16</sup>



in household cares;<sup>17</sup> and no effectual work could be expected from an idiot child.

How Hans came to be so fond of flowers was a mystery; but there are many mysteries of this sort in the world. It had been so from his baby-days, and many were the hours he had spent, unnoticed, in a corner of that back-yard, grubbing<sup>18</sup> in the old black soil, "making believe"<sup>19</sup> to have a garden with beds<sup>20</sup> and walks<sup>21</sup> like those he had seen elsewhere. Nay,<sup>22</sup> once or twice he had tried to grow mustard and cress, and even sweet-peas, a few seeds of which were given him by a neighbour's child; but somehow or other nothing ever came of these real attempts, and he had to make himself happy with the make-believe garden at the end.<sup>23</sup>

But it was no make-believe plant he was wailing over now, but a real *Géant de Batailles*<sup>24</sup> rose-tree, which had been given him many weeks before. It was thus: A good-natured nursery gardener,<sup>25</sup> who knew his father, had let him walk through his grounds one flower-show day,<sup>26</sup> before the company came; and having, by chance, noticed poor Hans sobbing from excitement at sight of the glories round him, his own heart melted; for he had an only and very clever son himself, and he felt sorry for the darkness over<sup>27</sup> his friend's child. So when Hans was going away, he gave him, not only a nosegay of the tulips and hyacinths, but a fine young rose-tree in a pot; "as fine a *Géant de Batailles* as had ever been raised," said he to Hans, as he offered it; adding that it would flower in six or eight weeks, and brighten all the place up by its rich blaze of colour.

Hans trembled as he received it, and he stood with his mouth half open, irresolute and abashed,<sup>28</sup> wanting to speak, yet not daring.

"What is it, boy?" asked the nursery gardener. "Speak out."

"How do you make your flowers so beautiful?" gasped Hans, half afraid of what he had said.

"Well, well," returned the nursery gardener, with a smile,

"some in one way and some in another; but we don't tell our secrets to everybody. Nevertheless, I'll tell you how to make your rose beautiful, for you'll make no bad use of anything, I'll be bound.<sup>29</sup> You've a yard or a court,<sup>30</sup> or some place with soil in it, eh?"

"Yes, yes," cried Hans.

"Then I'll tell you what you must do," pursued<sup>31</sup> the nursery gardener. "Dig a hole in a sheltered place pretty deep, you know, and put in a bone or two, and some hair (my son shall give you a handful) at the bottom. Then turn the plant out of the pot, not disturbing the ball of earth for the world,<sup>32</sup> remember; and set it right down upon the hair. Then fill up the hole neatly with soil, and say nothing about what you've done to anybody, and there's an end.<sup>33</sup> Keep it sheltered, mind,<sup>34</sup> and water it at first, or if you see it get very dry; and with soap-suds<sup>35</sup> whenever you can get them. Soap-suds and bones and hair are the main things. There's nothing like them for bringing roses to perfection. You'll have flowers as big as a hat, and as bright as cherries, before the summer's over, if you do as I say, and look well after the plant. There! good luck to you and it! Good-bye."

And this was the plant—this poor, wizened<sup>36</sup> thing—over which Hans was moaning. But how had it come to this? That was the difficulty. The gardener's son had given Hans the hair, and he had found the bones—there were plenty by<sup>37</sup> the dog-kennel; and he had turned the plant out of the pot, and not broken the ball of earth; and he had placed it upon the hair, and filled up the hole; and watered it at first, and whenever he saw it get very dry, and with soap-suds on a wash-day; for he had only to ask and have,<sup>38</sup> without question<sup>39</sup> or trouble. He had done everything, in short—surely everything! For he had put it in the most sheltered spot he could find—in the self-same spot where he had played at make-believe gardens as a child; and it had seemed as if an old dream were suddenly come true. And as to

looking well after it—could a miser have watched his gold with more jealous care? And no one had interfered; for he had told nobody, partly from some indefinite idea that the nursery gardener had ordered him not; partly because he thought it would be so nice to surprise his mother, some day before the summer was over, by the rich blaze of colour that was to brighten all the place.

The very maid <sup>40</sup> who hung out the clothes in the yard didn't know of it; for to keep the secret, and make the shelter of the tree more complete, he had set up boards across the corner where it was planted from wall to wall, and no one could see what was there. They looked upon the boards as some idle freak of the idiot mind.

It was the buds that failed first; those buds which ought to have swollen and grown larger day by day. Even his eye, sharpened now by anxious care, could detect that they rather dwindled than increased in size; and, observing this more and more as time went on, he one day summoned courage <sup>41</sup> to walk to the nursery gardens, and tell his fears to the giver of the plant.

But he, when he found that all he had ordered had been done, only smiled.

"I tell you again," said he, "and from long experience, there's nothing like bones and hair for bringing roses to perfection. You can't go wrong with them."<sup>42</sup> Give it a little more water or soap-suds. You've perhaps a light soil in your place. Give it more water. The buds will swell fast enough, I'll be bound. Indeed, I fancy you're watching it so closely you can't see true.<sup>43</sup> It's easy enough to do that, I can tell you. The buds are grown, I suspect, though you don't think so. Leave it to itself. Don't fancy anything wrong.<sup>44</sup> It's sure to be right with bones and hair and soap-suds. They're the finest rose-manure in the world."

Hans listened with his mouth open, nodded his head, with a "Thank you!" at the end, and went away, hoping he had not "seen true". And he did not take the boards

down nearly so often afterwards, lest his watching so closely should do harm. But every time he did take them down, he grew more and more unhappy. The healthy green of the leaves was no longer to be seen; as for the buds, they shrivelled gradually more and more. Growth anywhere there was none. Inch by inch the plant was dying—or Hans thought so, and he rubbed his eyes for further light,<sup>45</sup> in vain. And one day, when the last leaves which remained had crinkled up<sup>46</sup> and turned brown, he sat down on the ground, and wailed as I have said:

"What more could I have done for it than I have done?"

The dream of a dream come true at last,<sup>47</sup> was over.<sup>48</sup> The make-believe garden was still the only one he had ever enjoyed. He must go back to it again.

He replaced the boards, for he shrank from the very sight of the dying plant, and sat down on the ground again, though he scarcely knew why.

But presently there was a barking of the dog, and an opening of the door, and a shouting of "Hans!" by his mother. The nursery gardener was passing that way, and had called to admire the rose he expected to see. Hans could not speak, but led the way to the corner of the yard, and, when they were there, he pointed to the boards before he took them down, and exclaimed, trying to smile through his tears:

"I couldn't have sheltered it more, could I? It's never been scorched, or chilled, or blown upon, even. It's had bones, and hair, and water, and all you ordered, and I've looked well after it, and yet it's dead, I know!"

As he spoke, Hans lifted down the boards, and exposed the withered tree.

The nursery gardener stared at it, and then at Hans, in genuine amazement.

"You don't mean to say you've kept it *so* all the time?" cried he. "Why, what have you been thinking about, man? How could you expect it to live? Why, it's had no light!"



"You said nothing about that," replied Hans, his face distorted with bewilderment and grief. "You said you made roses beautiful with bones, and hair, and soap-suds, and that I should make mine beautiful with them too."

"But not without sunshine," shouted the nursery gardener, quite excited at the idea of such a mistake.

Hans made no answer. He could not utter another word. He sat down on the ground again, and hid his face in his hands.

"I must have spoken like a fool," exclaimed the nursery gardener, half to himself.<sup>49</sup> "But who'd have thought of anybody fancying a plant could get on without light? Well, perhaps I ought to have thought<sup>50</sup> though," he added, as his eye fell on poor Hans' doubled-up figure. Then, laying his hand on the lad's shoulder, it came into his heart to try and explain matters.

"Look up, Hans," said he. "It's not your fault at all—it's mine. There was something I forgot to tell you. I spoke like a fool when I talked of making roses beautiful with manure and things like that, as if they could do it themselves. I didn't mean that. It is God who makes the roses, you know, and He makes them so that they can't do without the light He chooses them to live in,<sup>51</sup> and that's the light from heaven, do you see?"

Here the nursery gardener paused to consider how he must go on, and Hans shuffled a bit,<sup>52</sup> and then looked up at his friend. And his friend saw the light from heaven streaming on that sad, half-intelligent face, with the red eyes straining upwards for comprehension;<sup>53</sup> and he proceeded:

"So they can't do without God's light, let you give them what manure you will.<sup>54</sup> They're only helps, Hans, such things as those.

"A man may help or hinder what God intends, by good or bad management, it's true; but that's all, and that's all I meant. Bones, and hair, and soap-suds are the finest rose-manure in the world, that's true too, and it's a great secret; but

they're all nothing—nothing, lad!—without God's secret, the light from heaven. Do you see what I mean, Hans?"

"I'm trying," said Hans.

"Hans," continued the nursery gardener, "it's been my fault, not yours; and you shall have another rose-tree, or we'll save this one yet, for if there's a bit of life left in it, God's light may bring it round. But tell me, now. You are a very good lad, you know, at times—indeed I fancy, always; but no matter, we'll call it at times.<sup>55</sup> What makes you ever good?"

Hans' catechism <sup>56</sup> had been short, but sound;<sup>57</sup> and he answered at once, "God's grace."

"Now that's just it!" <sup>58</sup> shouted the nursery gardener in delight. "That's just what I meant. And all the schooling, and teaching, and trying in the world won't do <sup>59</sup> without God's grace, will it, Hans?"

Hans nodded his agreement.<sup>60</sup>

"No, they're only manures and helps," pursued <sup>61</sup> the nursery gardener, "and very good things, no doubt, the same as bones, and hair, and soap-suds for roses, and there's nobody can dispute about *them*. But all the helps in the world can do nothing without the main thing God chooses them to thrive by,<sup>62</sup> and that's God's grace for a man, and God's light for a plant; and what one is for one, that the other is for the other, and it's my opinion it's the light of heaven for both."

If Hans did not quite follow the thread <sup>63</sup> of the nursery gardener's argument he must be excused. The nursery gardener understood what he meant himself, and that was something;<sup>64</sup> and Hans added to his small stock of observations the useful truth he had bought so dearly—viz. that plants cannot live without light.

Those who are interested farther in his fate will be glad to hear that the nursery gardener soon after turned one side of the old printer's back-yard into a garden, at his own expense, and gave Hans such plants and help, that both mother and

son had a few bright flowers of their own the next year, to delight their eyes.

But more than this. The poor lad proved so watchful and attentive: so obedient, too, to advice in his own small matters; and the rational occupation to an end<sup>64</sup> seemed so evidently to clear a something from the confusion of his mind, that it struck the nursery gardener one day to trust him with some little employment on his more important premises. And the experiment was not unsuccessful. On the one subject of flowers Hans became not only trustworthy but intelligent.

And so it came to pass, that it was in the nursery garden, among the flowers—his only idea of an earthly paradise—that the poor idiot ended his days. There, guileless as the beautiful creatures which surrounded him, and trustful as the Highest Wisdom could have made him, he lived; and thence did the spirit, so long pent<sup>65</sup> in an imperfect earthly tabernacle,<sup>66</sup> return to the great Lord of Life and light and intelligence, without whom "nothing is strong, nothing holy".

#### NOTES

1. Small compound behind a house.
2. Mentally defective; partly insane.
3. A reference to the proverb: "Every cloud has its silver lining", i.e. every sorrow has its bright side.
4. A prayer of thanksgiving.
5. He could never be induced to say.
6. i.e. he was being gradually prepared for the higher life beyond death.
7. Was passionately fond of.
8. Throughout the whole summer.
9. Kind-heartedness.
10. Bunch of flowers.
11. Line (of houses).
12. The little wooden house in which a dog lives.
13. Little bits of ground with badly growing (grass).
14. Ground used for drying clothes after they are washed.
15. Ropes.

16. To do.
17. In the matter of household work and worry.
18. Digging in a childish way.
19. Pretending (to have); (having in imagination).
20. The sections into which a garden is divided.
21. Footpaths (between the beds).
22. Not only so, but also.
23. After all; in the long run.
24. "Battles' Giant", the flower having been first produced by a M(onsieur) Batailles (Mr. Battles).
25. A gardener who grows flowers and plants for sale.
26. One day on which there was an exhibition of flowers.
27. The sorrow that hung over (namely, the weakness of his mind).
28. Shy.
29. I will guarantee; I feel certain.
30. Another word for a small enclosed space beside a house.
31. Continued.
32. On any account (literally "even if you were to gain the whole world by doing so").
33. That's all.
34. Be careful about this.
35. Soapy water.
36. Faded and dried. (Pronounce "wizzened").
37. Beside.
38. He could get whatever he wanted from his parents by simply asking for it.
39. Being questioned.
40. Even the maid-servant.
41. Became bold enough.
42. You cannot fail if you use them.
43. You cannot see things as they are.
44. Imagine that there is anything wrong.
45. Hoping by this means to see better.
46. Dried up and formed into wrinkles.
47. His hope that his childhood's dream had come true at last.
48. Gone.
49. Partially speaking to himself (and only partially to Hans).
50. Considered (that Hans needed more careful teaching than other people).
51. In which he wishes that they should live.
52. Moved uneasily for a little while.
53. In the hope of understanding.
54. No matter what manure you give them. (We would usually say simply: "Give them what manure you will".)



55. We shall say (that you are good only) sometimes (though I believe that you are good always).

56. A series of questions on religious subjects, the answers to which children learn by heart.

57. (It was) correct and well learned.

58. The very point.

59. Succeed.

60. To show that he agreed.

61. By means of which God wishes that they should thrive.

62. Course (various steps).

63. That was a matter of some importance (for some people do not understand even their own arguments).

64. An occupation requiring intelligence and with a definite end in view.

65. Shut up; confined.

66. A temporary and hastily made abode. (The idea is that the body is only the temporary home of the soul during its earthly life; its real home is with God.)

### QUESTIONS

1. Have you known anyone who was "mentally defective" or partially insane? Did he or she at all resemble Hans of this story?

2. If you know anything about schools for "mental defectives", tell what you know about them. If you know nothing of them, then describe the kind of school to which you think they should be sent.

3. Why should people be encouraged to keep gardens?

4. If you have done any gardening or field work, write a parable about one of your experiences. Mention at the end the lesson you intend your parable to teach.

5. Do you consider "The Light of Life" a good parable? Give reasons for your answer.

## Miss S. Sorabji

The life-story of Mrs. Ranade is taken from a book, recently published, called *Women in Modern India*. Miss Evelyn C. Gedge, one of the two ladies who edited the book, explains in a preface the origin of their undertaking. She found (1) that very little is known in Britain about Indian women, and (2) that most of the literature about India which is read in Britain is written by Europeans. Accordingly she had the idea of getting together, along with an Indian fellow-worker, a series of papers on Indian women written by Indian women.

The result is the book *Women in Modern India*. It contains fifteen papers written by Indian ladies of different communities. These important essays give an interesting account of the work done by Indian women of our day in different spheres of activity, such as Medicine, Education, Law, Art, and the different branches of Social Service. The article on Mrs. Ranade was written by Miss S. Sorabji of St. Helena's School, Poona, who has very kindly supplied for this volume her own manuscript, so that the article may appear exactly as she wrote it. The concluding poem appeared in a magazine called *Stri Dharma*, in 1925.

## SHRIMATI RAMABAI RANADE

Ramabai Ranade, the founder and President of the now famous Seva Sadan of Poona, was born in a little hill-girt town in the Konkan, of a family whose faithful service to the Peshwas had won for them a Jagir in Devarashtra.

We picture the little Brahmin maiden, sitting on her father's knee, listening wide-eyed to his stories of saints and gods and spirits, or watching her mother, who was skilled in the knowledge of herbs and plants, distilling remedies for the villagers who came to her, to be cured of their ills.

It was in such a wholesome, unselfish atmosphere that Ramabai learned her first lessons of love for her fellow-men. No wonder that Justice Ranade found in her an apt pupil, when he began to prepare her (the little thirteen-year old bride, whom he had been compelled by his father to wed) for this great work that she was to do in Poona after his death—a work that stands to-day a magnificent monument, showing what a good woman can achieve, if she will but yield herself, a willing instrument, to God's omnipotent hand.

We have illuminating glimpses of Ramabai Ranade's early life in her *Reminiscences*. One such is peculiarly interesting. Her father was going to Poona, that wonderful town of which he used to bring home great stories, to amuse his little daughter as they sat under the shade of the dark trees in the hot afternoons, or beneath the feathery bamboos when the harvest moon rode high in the cloudless sky. For very long, Ramabai had coveted a doll—a beautiful doll such as, he told her, was to be purchased in the wonder shops, patronized by English people. Now she ventured, as he bade her good-bye, to whisper her wish to him, and obtained a ready promise that, when he returned, he would bring her what she so desired. For days she went about hugging her delightful secret. At last, to make matters doubly sure, she thought she would breathe her hopes to the tutelary<sup>1</sup> Deity of the house, when she did her morning pooja. No one else should know about it! Oh no, it must be a secret between her father, herself, and Shiwa the Omnipotent, who was able to make her dream come true! So it was with a certain shock of surprise that she heard her brother say: "So father is bringing a doll home for you!" "How did you know?" asked the little maiden. Was it possible—but no, it could not be! The silent Shiva would never have betrayed her! Seeing her mystification the teasing brother would not tell her that the simple explanation of her puzzle was a letter he had received from his father that morning. It is natural incidents like this that helps us to see why Mrs. Ranade understood

children so well, and was so loved by them. She never forgot, when with them, that she had once been a child, and so their little troubles and joys were always shared with a sympathy that was as natural to her as it is rare with others.

When Justice Ranade decided to educate his girl-wife, he set himself a task in which he had many opponents in his own household. From the time Ramabai, in the sanctuary of her learned husband's own room, made her first obeisance to the god of learning (Ganesh), to the day when she made her first speech before Sir James Fergusson, the Governor of Bombay, in the Town Hall in Poona, regarding the necessity of establishing a High School for Indian girls, she had to suffer quiet, but bitter, persecution from the orthodox old women in her own house. But she allowed nothing to deter her from the course her husband had laid down for her. The bitter taunts she heard downstairs could not damp the joy she felt as she sat upstairs, and recited Sanskrit Shloks, or read Meadows Taylor's thrilling "Tara" or "Sita" aloud to the Judge. What did it matter if, after a joyous afternoon at one of Pandita Ramabai's<sup>2</sup> lectures, she, on coming home, was outcasted, so to speak, and not allowed to help in the culinary<sup>3</sup> operations of the women of the family, until she had had a bath of purification? The water for the bath, however, had to be drawn (so said the scandalized<sup>4</sup> ladies) from a well outside, and not from the fountain *within* the sacred precincts of their home. Patiently the brave-hearted girl (bent on learning all her husband wished her to know, and on coming up to his ideal<sup>5</sup> of an educated wife) pursued her course, unmurmuringly; and would quietly pick up the brass or copper vessel given to her, and go out to the dark well outside, to draw water for the ablutions that would fit her to sit amongst her women relations again.

But the dark water brought on a fever which confined her to her bed for many a day. Then it was that Justice Ranade discovered all that she had been enduring, and put



his foot down on<sup>6</sup> the petty persecutions (that had been going on, under his own roof) of his little girl-wife.

One cannot help thinking that it was thus that Ramabai Ranade learned the lesson of tolerance,<sup>7</sup> and acquired that broad-mindedness and sympathy which so fitted her for the Presidentship of an Institution that aims at giving to Indian women every opportunity for self-realization and self-expression, and helps them to develop every God-given faculty. In the bracing atmosphere of her Seva Sadan she was able to give her countrywomen what the human soul craves so ardently, and what is, in fact, its birthright.

Happy days, however, were in store for her—the Judge was appointed to Nasik, and there, at last, Ramabai had the joy of managing her own house. The golden memories, stored up in those days, helped immeasurably in brightening the dreariness of those that followed her husband's death. Whether in the house, attending to the duties that every wife loves to perform—the duties that constitute the mysterious art of home-making (and are of an intellectual as much as of a social character)—or in the garden which she so loved, where she coaxed the fragrant mogra or the stately rose to grow, Ramabai's heart sang merrily.

She used to tell how, when the Judge (in order to test her practical knowledge) asked her what sum she needed for the household monthly expenses, she, who had never been allowed in Poona to know anything of the inner working of the domestic arrangements, named a figure below what was actually needed; and how, as the end of the month approached, when it hardly seemed possible that the little sum would last out the time, she was overcome with anxiety and shame, because she feared the emptiness of the household exchequer<sup>8</sup> was due to her lack of economy. She would not speak, however, of the trouble, and tried to eke out<sup>9</sup> the sum, till the true state of affairs was discovered by the kind Judge, who assured her she had done splendidly, and he had only been waiting for her to ask him for more money.

The next household budget<sup>10</sup> was, you may be sure, more accurately and more generously drawn up.

In Nasik, where some of the happiest days of her life were spent, Ramabai found a family that seemed a link between the old orthodox world that had tried to hold so tyrannical a sway over her, and the new progressive world that was beckoning to her to come and taste the joys of freedom, education, culture, and reform. They were keenly interested in Social Service, and, encouraged by their example, Ramabai began taking part in activities that had as their object the good of others. She presided at a School Prize-giving about this time, and was much interested in the school-children to whom she distributed the prizes.

But life is made up of sunshine and shadow, and the clouds gathered over Ramabai's horizon,<sup>11</sup> when Justice Ranade, in the course of his duties, contracted cholera in a cholera-infected district. In a public rest-house the faithful young wife nursed him. Who can describe the agony of mind through which she passed in that lonely vigil by the sick man's bed? The local doctor declared his pulse was failing, and in her anguish she felt she must seek comfort in prayer; and so she stole out into the gathering darkness and made her way into the little temple in the courtyard, where sad and weary pilgrims for scores of years had sought and found relief in their despair; bowing not so much, surely, to the little stone image there, as to the great God Who bids us seek His face, and to Whom the heavy-laden, stretching forth imploring hands into the darkness, cry "Have mercy on me!" There, in the dimly lighted temple, a weeping woman fell prostrate, and poured out her heart to Him Who alone could help her, and she felt a sudden peace steal over her. Somehow she knew her prayer had been answered, and she stole back to her post at the sick man's side, comforted and strengthened. Thus does the human soul, when it flings itself on God, find Him ever faithful! Mr. Ranade recovered, and it was not till 1901 that he passed away.

Smitten, and well-nigh overwhelmed, Ramabai shut herself up for a little; but then came the thought of the suffering womanhood around her, and it was in that temporary seclusion she consecrated her life to the service of her countrywomen. Forgetting, or rather laying aside, her own sorrow, she went forth to minister to others in trouble, and to lift the eyes of those who, afflicted like herself, perchance felt that for them life was over, to the great fields of labour,<sup>12</sup> the golden harvest of opportunity,<sup>12</sup> that awaited their sickles.<sup>12</sup> New vistas<sup>13</sup> opened before them, where hitherto they had seen nothing but a blank wall! Yes, to those hopeless, despairing ones, she, like her friend, Pandita Ramabai, came with a message of hope, of possibilities of service and usefulness, and bade them rise and follow her; to the captive women in prison, to whom she took the sympathy and cheer they so much needed, to keep them from despair; to the little lads in the Reformatory, who were being given a chance to make good<sup>14</sup> and fit themselves for honest citizenship; to the bedside of the sick and dying; and the Hospital where lived the mentally afflicted ones.

Around her she gathered a band of women who used to gather, week by week, to listen to lectures on how to render First Aid to the injured, to work for the poor, and listen to accounts of women in other lands who served their fellows.<sup>15</sup> Where did she dream that beautiful dream of a Home of Service, where would come all those whose hearts God had touched with love for the great suffering world? One cannot tell—perhaps as she sat at the feet of her husband, that Prince of Reformers, listening to his inspiring words; or in those dark days, when a simple English or Sanskrit lesson taken in her husband's room, or attendance at a lecture given by her friend Pandita Ramabai, would bring down a storm of opposition and reproach which she found hard to bear. At any rate the dream became a reality; and one wonderful day she formulated her plans, organized the work which has grown, so marvellously, into the colossal<sup>16</sup> Institution

known as the Poona Seva Sadan, with its branches all over the Presidency.

How does the mighty oak grow from the little acorn? Who can follow the miraculous process? One can only watch, and wonder, and rejoice.

As early as 1904 at the All India Women's Conference in Bombay, Mrs. Ranade outlined the nature of the Social Service she proposed should be carried on, by those whose motto she declared was to be: "Life is a sacred trust". How fully she herself realized her trusteeship, every day of her selfless life proved.

The great Seva Sadan had its inaugural meetings in Mrs. Ranade's own house (that home where her illustrious husband had brought the girl-wife whom he was to train for service, such as only a master-mind could have conceived). From a small attempt on the part of the members of "the Hindu Ladies' Social and Literary Club" to educate women by means of regular classes and institutions, started to impart instruction of a religious, literary, medical, and industrial character, the work grew and grew into the splendid organization it is, and was at the time of Mrs. Ranade's death.

In a brief review written by her ten years after she began, she set forth some of the principal objects of the Seva Sadan, thus:

(a) To teach and educate women by means of regular classes, and to impart instruction of a religious, literary, scientific, medical, and industrial character. To teach them the principles of First Aid, Hygiene,<sup>17</sup> Sanitation, and Domestic Economy.

(b) To widen the range of women's knowledge by means of libraries, lectures, publications, books, magazines, &c., and by tours, excursions, and other popular methods.

(c) To enable women to participate intelligently in all domestic, social, and national responsibilities, and to inculcate in<sup>18</sup> their minds principles of self-reliance and mutual helpfulness.

(d) To train women to render in a patriotic spirit, educational, medical, and philanthropic service to the motherland, and their brothers and sisters in specially backward areas.



(e) To help in the promotion of national work in all these and similar ways for the social, material, and educational uplift of Indian women.

(f) To promote greater fellowship amongst the women of India.

(g) To start institutions for the promotion of these objects and ideals, and to affiliate <sup>19</sup> those that are working for them.

(h) To adopt such measures as will be conducive to <sup>20</sup> the furtherance of these objects.

(i) To directly work <sup>21</sup> to promote the all-round well-being of Indian womanhood.

Every one of these objects this brave and noble worker kept in view throughout the fifteen years that God spared her to preside over the destinies and welfare of this Institution, which is the joy and pride of every woman in India who has had the privilege of watching its development and marking its progress.

One of Mrs. Ranade's greatest achievements was the establishment of the Seva Sadan Nursing and Medical Associations. It was due to her inspiration and influence alone, that high caste Hindu widows and girls volunteered to take up a work that, above all others, is crying out <sup>22</sup> to be done in India. What marvellous forces she was harnessing <sup>23</sup> for the service of the women and children of India, when she took her first batch of probationers to the Sassoon Hospital Nursing Department, even Mrs. Ranade did not know! But all through the coming years, there will be a stream of women lining <sup>24</sup> into the Hospitals, to be equipped for service for ministry to the suffering women and girls of this land! Oh glorious thought, that it was her hand that unlocked the door that will, that *must*, remain open, as long as there are pain and suffering in our land.

The ordinary social worker, surveying the field of work before her in all its paralysing magnitude, <sup>25</sup> might easily have been discouraged; but Mrs. Ranade's incurable optimism saw no obstacles—saw indeed only the greatest opportunities for service, and seized them. There was hardly a phase of work to which she and her workers did not turn their attention. To the Home, with its wide-open doors, came

widows, who sought hope and comfort, and found it in serving others; young girls with aims and hopes, and a longing to fit themselves for a wider life; little children who needed protection and love; the sick and sorrowful who claimed aid and advice. For all and sundry <sup>26</sup> the Seva Sadan had help. Mrs. Ranade, the loving mother and sympathizer, opened her heart and protecting arms to all! In the world of letters, <sup>27</sup> her help was claimed on Text Book and other Committees; and her reputation as a writer was established by the production of her book *Reminiscences* (now regarded as a Marathi classic <sup>28</sup>). In politics, the versatility <sup>29</sup> of this wonderful woman was evidenced when she threw herself, heart and soul, into the campaign begun to obtain the vote for Indian women. Surely a new era dawned for India when she presided over a gigantic meeting of women who crowded (twenty or thirty deep) round the courtyard of the Seva Sadan, up to the second or third storey and even on the roof, to listen, in rapt silence, to the eloquent speeches of those who, like their Western sisters, were awakened from their age-long sleep, to their duties and privileges as citizens, and claimed their God-given rights.

It was a proud day for her friends when Sir H. Lawrence, a member of the Executive Council, at the excited debate on the question of Woman's Suffrage, <sup>30</sup> declared he would consider it an honour to serve on a Council of which Mrs. Ramabai Ranade was a member.

It is not surprising that she was the leader in Poona of an agitation for compulsory Primary Education for girls.

She anticipated members of Council who to-day are introducing bills regarding a widow's title, or the lack of it, to her husband's property, by organizing lectures and debates in order to educate public opinion. Her demand was that the law be altered to suit present-day conditions. Before she could accomplish much, however, she was called to a higher sphere of labour. <sup>31</sup> It is good to feel that, whatever the future may hold of opportunity and freedom for women,

Ramabai, Ranade, and other great pioneers have done their bit <sup>32</sup> in preparing the way for them.

A few years before her death, she was asked by the Municipality to undertake the care of the thousands of women pilgrims and their little children, who attend the Annual Fair at Alandi. With her faithful band of workers (who seemed from the very first to have caught her spirit of love and devotion to the cause of oppressed womanhood), she set forth for the sacred place, and there in the temple courtyard, day and night, she and her co-workers stood, organizing the women's visits to the shrine, taking charge of the infant while some weary pilgrim slipped in to lay her offerings and her prayers at the feet of the god. Through the hot days, they would deal out cool draughts of water to the poor thirsty ones, and so really and materially did they improve the conditions of these countless frightened hordes <sup>33</sup> of women, that they came and fell at Mrs. Ranade's feet in gratitude for the very real help rendered them.

Since her initiation <sup>34</sup> of this great branch of Social Work, the Seva Sadan has been asked to work in co-operation with the Provincial Committee in organizing National Health and Baby Sections, in the Exhibition that is held by the Municipality for the benefit of the pilgrims that flock to Alandi from all over India. How little did this beginner of big things realize whereunto <sup>35</sup> this would grow!

But one of her outstanding characteristics was her inability to see that there was anything extraordinary in her undertakings. Someone said to her one day: "Dear Mrs. Ranade, how wonderful it is that you should be able to do so much and such great things for God!" "Oh no!" she exclaimed quickly, "there is nothing wonderful in what I am doing. I was fortunate in being the instrument that happened to be lying nearest God's hand, and so He picked me up and used me!" "There lies the secret," answered her friend. "It is because you lie so near His hand that He uses you." She looked thoughtful, and a quiet peace stole into her face.

Would that many instruments, polished and ready for use,<sup>36</sup> might lie where the Great Master might find them, when He needed them for His work!

Soon after her husband's death, when in her utter misery she shut herself up for a little, there went to her an English friend—one who divined<sup>37</sup> that the only consolation for Mrs. Ranade lay in consoling others. "Come with me," she said, "and let us carry a ray of sunshine to those who are shut out, alas! by their own wrong-doing, from the world." And so she carried her off to the captive women in Yeravda Jail. With that wonderful gift of sympathy that she possessed in such limitless measure, this good woman who became the "prison angel" to those unfortunate women, threw herself, heart and soul, into the work she did so faithfully for over twenty years.

Nothing deterred her from those fortnightly visits, to the jail—not the length and loneliness of the drive out there, nor the apparent hopelessness of the task before her. Summer or winter, rain or shine,<sup>38</sup> her brougham<sup>39</sup> used to be seen driving up to the big iron gates, behind which were so many miserable sin-burdened souls.

Her gentle sympathetic inquiries about their health and comfort soon drew a crowd of women round her; and then, when they had all gathered (generally about two hundred) in the open courtyard, she would read aloud an Abhang of Tukaram, which she would translate into simple language, explaining the uplifting thoughts and sentiments, to those who had wandered so far—so very far, alas!—from the path of righteousness; and into the hard faces would steal a softness as unusual as it was beautiful, and eyes unused to tears would grow moist and wistful, as new thoughts and aspirations and longings were aroused by the gentle pleading of the one whose visits made the prison less dismal and their lot less intolerable. A short, simple prayer, that the loving God would pardon and bless them in their captivity, would follow; and hearts that perchance had grown hard and callous melted



towards Him Who was yearning to forgive and raise them. This was the errand on which this woman, whom God had called to service, went, through all these twenty years that she visited Yeravda Prison! But who, except God and the angels, know of all the numberless errands of love and mercy which she performed, or of all the cups of cold water<sup>40</sup> drawn from the well of sympathy, that she held to the parched lips of Earth's weary pilgrims.

Is it surprising that away in far-off Africa a dying Indian woman, on being told she could not live much longer, gathered her new-born babe to her breast, and made up her mind in her agony of fear to cross the (to her) terrible<sup>41</sup> ocean, in order to lay it in the motherly arms of her friend Ramabai Ranade? How faithfully she tended the helpless infant, till the boy grew into manhood, is a story by itself.

Then came the end. It was a hot April afternoon when the angel of Death hovered over the chamber where the great woman lay a-dying. For some days she had been ill, in agony—but oh! so brave, so uncomplaining, so calm, even to the very end, thinking of others rather than of herself. It was not, however, till the western Sun had dipped<sup>42</sup> behind the ghats, and the sudden darkness of the oriental night had settled down upon the crowded city, that her soul took its flight to God.

They laid her in the large Hall that bore her name. A noble, beautiful figure she lay there, wrapped in her snow-white draperies,<sup>43</sup> and covered with the fragrant roses and mogras she had loved so well to weave into garlands, to adorn the life-sized portrait of her husband that always held the place of honour in her simple room.

The news of her passing<sup>44</sup> soon spread through the city, and they came, one and all—men, women, and children—an endless procession, to file<sup>45</sup> in silent reverence past her who had been a mother to her people—Ramabai, the friend, the enthusiast, the worker! She had spent her years in the uplifting of her people. She had blazed the trail<sup>46</sup> for them

in a practically trackless wild! Who, who would follow her? Thank God, there are many many noble women, from her own dearly loved Seva Sadan, who have taken up the torch her dying hands had dropped;<sup>47</sup> who are now carrying on the glorious work she started; and who are adding to their ranks, every day, devoted, well-equipped, enthusiastic workers, whose one object in life is to strive for the up-lift and betterment of suffering humanity.

All honour to these daughters of India, who with so little help, after such age-long opposition, have risen, as soon as they were given the chance of casting off the enslaving shackles of custom, to such heights of self-sacrifice and service! God bless them, one and all, and may they ever cherish the God-inspired ideals of the wonderful woman who made it possible for them to rise thus.

Never were the prospects of woman's complete emancipation brighter—never was the day nearer breaking.

' Arise, Oh woman, arise!  
 This is the dawn; the bugles break the skies.<sup>48</sup>  
 Behold, Oh woman, behold!  
 The gates are opening to the dreams of old,<sup>49</sup>  
 Like waters of a sea  
 That break their icy fetters and go free.<sup>50</sup>  
 Arise! in every land,  
 Our dreams-lit<sup>51</sup> woman-hood,  
 Our sister band.  
 Rise! Let the spring tide flow,  
 Kindling with April fires the fields of snow.<sup>52</sup>  
 Rise, woman, rise in power!  
 Rise till the dead world  
 Breaks to golden flower!"

(EDWIN MARKHAM.)

## NOTES

1. Guardian.
2. The story of the Christian, Pandita Ramabai, one of the greatest of India's women, is also told in *Women in Modern India*. Her father was a learned Shastri and one of the earliest advocates of education and freedom for Indian women. She was herself an



accomplished Sanskrit scholar. Impressed with the sorrows of Indian womanhood, and having herself had experience of the horrors of famine, after the terrible famine of 1896 and the Gujerat famine of 1900 she founded an Orphanage School, Training School, and Industrial School at Bombay; which was afterwards transferred to Kedgaon near Poona, and is best known as the Widows' Home.

3. Cooking.
4. Shocked (by her inattention to caste rules).
5. Reaching his standard ("Being the kind of educated wife he wished her to be").
6. Idiom. "Firmly put an end to."
7. Willingness to let other people have their own beliefs and follow their own practices.
8. Purse, supply of money (originally used of the purse or money supply of the nation).
9. Make it last by great care.
10. Estimate of the amount of money required.
11. Metaphor. "Future prospects."
12. A continued metaphor in which social problems are compared to a field, and the social worker to a farmer who after long labour reaps the harvest (of evils destroyed and good done) with his sickle or small scythe (i.e. the social measures adopted).
13. Literally "view of a long, narrow space between trees"; here "narrow, but far-stretching view of good to be accomplished".
14. Reform; give a good account of themselves.
15. "Fellows" are other members of the same society, brothers or sisters in a metaphorical sense (therefore we must never say "fellow brothers").
16. Enormously large.
17. The study of how to be healthy.
18. Impress upon.
19. To bring into close connexion with itself.
20. Tend towards.
21. The correct phrase is "to work directly".
22. Metaphor. "Urgently requiring."
23. Metaphor. "Getting ready."
24. Entering as in a long line.
25. So great that the sight of it paralyses our energies (i.e. makes us feel helpless).
26. People of all sorts (literally "Everyone collectively and individually").
27. Literature.
28. Book of the highest quality, of undying fame.
29. Many-sidedness, capacity in many directions.

30. Votes for women.

31. I.e. she died, the idea being that after death good people go on doing God's work, work of a nobler kind than is possible on earth.

32. A colloquial phrase meaning "have done their share of the work".

33. Enormous crowds (a word usually employed in contempt, here in pity).

34. Founding, starting.

35. To what point, i.e. to what enormous extent.

36. A religious phrase meaning "people completely ready (like the tools of a master workman) to do any work to which God may call them".

37. Knew by instinct.

38. Sunshine.

39. (Pronounce as in "broom".) A covered carriage, in those days drawn by one horse.

40. Metaphorical for "any acts of kindness". The reference is to a saying of Jesus about the blessedness of one "who gives unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water".

41. Which seemed terrible to her.

42. Literally "had sunk in the sea" (a reference to the old idea that when the sun sets it sinks in the Western sea).

43. The clothing she wore after death.

44. A poetic word for "death" (passing into the other world).

45. Proceed one by one.

46. Prepared the way. (A "trail" is a path made through thick jungle. The first settlers in a district have to make the path, and then "blaze" it by cutting off portions of the bark of the trees between which the path runs, so that others will be able to follow the path.)

47. Carried on the work when she could do it no longer. The reference is to the old Greek relay race in which each runner handed a lighted torch to his successor.

48. The sound of the bugles that call to battle is so loud that it seems as if it were breaking the sky.

49. The ancient dreams of woman's freedom and greatness are now beginning to be a reality.

50. That melt and drift away. (The frozen sea of the north is described as being held in fetters. The summer heat breaks the fetters, i.e. melts the ice.)

51. Illuminated by dreams, i.e. inspired by visions.

52. Literally: "warming with the heat of spring the snow-fields of winter", i.e. filling with new life and hope the minds of women, hitherto dull and despairing.

QUESTIONS

1. Why have the Indian people been so unwilling to educate their women?
2. What were the qualities that gave Mrs. Ranade her power?
3. What do you understand by Social Service?
4. Give an account of the Seva Sadan.
5. What are the chief difficulties encountered in the work of trying to help Indian women?

## Robert Louis Stevenson

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) was distinguished as traveller, essayist, critic, poet, and novelist. Though himself an invalid, and often for long periods a helpless sufferer, he delighted multitudes by his carefully written and vivid stories of open-air adventure by land and sea. The scene of *Kidnapped*, from which the following extract is taken, is laid in Scotland in the early part of the second half of the eighteenth century, when the troubles that arose from the Stewart Rebellion of 1745 were not yet over.

The hero, David Balfour, on the death of his parents, went to visit his uncle Ebenezer. This uncle held an estate which by law belonged to David, though David did not know that. The uncle gave him a very uncivil reception, unsuccessfully plotted to kill him, and then bribed the captain of a sailing-ship to kidnap him and carry him to be sold as a slave on one of the American plantations.

The ship sailed from Queensferry, near Edinburgh, up the east coast of Scotland and along the north coast; and then during a great storm was wrecked on one of the Western islands. David was cast ashore on what he at first supposed to be a little island, separate from the main island (called Mull).

### THE ISLET

With my stepping ashore<sup>1</sup> I began the most unhappy part of my adventures. It was half-past twelve in the morning, and though the wind was broken by the land, it was a cold night. I dared not sit down (for I thought I should have frozen), but took off my shoes and walked to and fro upon the sand, barefoot and beating my breast, with infinite weariness. There was no sound of man or cattle; not a cock crew, though it was about the hour of their first waking; only the surf broke outside in the distance, which put me in

mind of my perils and those of my friend.<sup>2</sup> To walk by the sea at that hour of the morning, and in a place so desert-like and lonesome, struck me with a kind of fear.

As soon as the day began to break I put on my shoes and climbed a hill—the ruggedest scramble<sup>3</sup> I ever undertook—falling, the whole way, between big blocks of granite, or leaping from one to another. When I got to the top the dawn was come. There was no sign of the brig,<sup>4</sup> which must have lifted from the reef<sup>5</sup> and sunk. The boat,<sup>6</sup> too, was nowhere to be seen. There was never a sail upon the ocean; and in what I could see of the land, was neither house nor man.

I was afraid to think what had befallen my shipmates, and afraid to look longer at so empty a scene. What with<sup>7</sup> my wet clothes and weariness, and my belly that now began to ache with hunger, I had enough to trouble me without that. So I set off eastward along the south coast, hoping to find a house where I might warm myself, and perhaps get news of those I had lost. And at the worst, I considered the sun would soon rise and dry my clothes.

After a little, my way was stopped by a creek or inlet of the sea, which seemed to run pretty deep into the land; and as I had no means to get across, I must needs change my direction to go about<sup>8</sup> the end of it. It was still the roughest kind of walking; indeed the whole, not only of Earraid,<sup>9</sup> but of the neighbouring part of Mull (which they call the Ross) is nothing but a jumble of granite rocks with heather in among.<sup>10</sup> At first the creek kept narrowing as I had looked<sup>11</sup> to see; but presently to my surprise it began to widen out again. At this I scratched my head, but had still no notion of the truth; until at last I came to a rising ground, and it burst upon me all in a moment that I was cast upon a little barren isle, and cut off on every side by the salt seas.

Instead of the sun rising to dry me, it came on to rain, with a thick mist; so that my case was lamentable.

I stood in the rain and shivered, and wondered what to do, till it occurred to me that perhaps the creek was fordable.



Back I went to the narrowest point and waded in. But not three yards from the shore, I plumped in head over ears;<sup>12</sup> and if ever I was heard of more, it was rather by God's grace than my own prudence. I was no wetter (for that could hardly be) but I was all the colder for this mishap; and having lost another hope, was the more unhappy.

And now, all at once, the yard<sup>13</sup> came in my head. What had carried me through the roost<sup>14</sup> would surely serve me to cross this little quiet creek in safety. With that I set off, undaunted, across the top of the isle, to fetch and carry it back. It was a weary tramp in all ways, and if hope had not buoyed me up, I must have cast myself down and given up. Whether with the sea salt, or because I was growing fevered, I was distressed with thirst, and had to stop, as I went, and drink the peaty<sup>15</sup> water out of the hags.<sup>16</sup>

I came to the bay at last, more dead than alive; and at the first glance, I thought the yard was something further out than when I left it. In I went, for the third time, into the sea. The sand was smooth and firm and shelved gradually down; so that I could wade out till the water was almost to my neck and the little waves splashed into my face. But at that depth my feet began to leave me, and I durst venture in no further. As for the yard, I saw it bobbing<sup>17</sup> very quietly some twenty feet in front of me.

I had borne up well until this last disappointment; but at that I came ashore and flung myself down upon the sands and wept.

The time I spent upon the island is still so horrible a thought to me, that I must pass it lightly over. In all the books I have read of people cast away, they had either their pockets full of tools, or a chest of things would be thrown upon the beach along with them, as if on purpose. My case was very different. I had nothing in my pockets but money and Alan's<sup>18</sup> silver button;<sup>19</sup> and being inland bred,<sup>20</sup> I was as much short of knowledge as of means.

I knew indeed that shell-fish were counted good to eat;



and among the rocks of the isle I found a great plenty of limpets,<sup>21</sup> which at first I could scarcely strike from their places, not knowing quickness to be needful. There were, besides, some of the little shells that we<sup>22</sup> call buckies; I think periwinkle is the English name. Of these two I made my whole diet, devouring them cold and raw as I found them; and so hungry was I that at first they seemed to me delicious.

Perhaps they were out of season, or perhaps there was something wrong in the sea about my island. But at least I had no sooner eaten my first meal than I was seized with giddiness and retching<sup>23</sup> and lay for a long time no better than dead. A second trial of the same food (indeed I had no other) did better with me, and revived my strength. But as long as I was on the island, I never knew what to expect when I had eaten; sometimes all was well, and sometimes I was thrown into a miserable sickness; nor could I ever distinguish what particular fish it was that hurt me.

All day it streamed rain; the island ran like a sop;<sup>24</sup> there was no dry spot to be found; and when I lay down that night, between two boulders that made a kind roof, my feet were in a bog.

The second day I crossed the island to all sides. There was no one part of it better than another; it was all desolate and rocky; nothing living on it but game birds<sup>25</sup> which I lacked the means to kill, and the gulls which haunted the outlying rocks in a prodigious number. But the creek, or straits, that cut off the isle from the mainland of the Ross, opened out on the north into a bay, and the bay again opened into the Sound<sup>26</sup> of Iona; and it was the neighbourhood of this place that I chose to be my home; though if I had thought upon the very name of home in such a spot, I must have burst out weeping.

I had good reasons for my choice. There was in this part of the isle a little hut of a house like a pig's hut, where fishers used to sleep when they came there upon their business; but the turf roof of it had fallen entirely in; so that the hut was

of no use to me, and gave me less shelter than my rocks. What was more important, the shell-fish on which I lived grew there in plenty; when the tide was out <sup>27</sup> I could gather a peck <sup>28</sup> at a time: and this was doubtless a convenience. But the other reason went deeper. I had become in no way used to the horrid solitude of the isle, but still looked round me on all sides (like a man that was hunted) between fear and hope that I might see some human creature coming. Now, from a little up the hillside over the bay, I could catch a sight of the great, ancient church and the roofs of the people's houses in Iona.<sup>29</sup> And on the other hand, over the low country of the Ross, I saw smoke go up, morning and evening, as if from a homestead in a hollow of the land.

I used to watch this smoke, when I was wet and cold, and had my head half turned <sup>30</sup> with loneliness; and think of the fireside and the company,<sup>31</sup> till my heart burned. It was the same with the roofs of Iona. Altogether, this sight I had of men's homes and comfortable lives, although it put a point on <sup>32</sup> my own sufferings, yet it kept hope alive, and helped me to eat my raw shell-fish (which had soon grown to be a disgust) and saved me from the sense of horror I had whenever I was quite alone with dead rocks, and fowls, and the rain, and the cold sea.

I say it kept hope alive; and indeed it seemed impossible that I should be left to die on the shores of my own country, and within view of a church tower and the smoke of men's houses. But the second day passed; and though as long as the light lasted I kept a bright look-out for boats on the Sound or men passing on the Ross, no help came near me. It still rained; and I turned in to sleep, as wet as ever and with a cruel sore throat, but a little comforted, perhaps, by having said good-night to my next neighbours, the people of Iona.

Charles the Second declared a man could stay out-doors more days in a year in the climate of England than in any

other. This was very like a king with a palace at his back and changes of dry clothes. But he must have had better luck on his flight from Worcester<sup>33</sup> than I had on that miserable isle. It was the height of the summer; yet it rained for more than twenty-four hours, and did not clear until the afternoon of the third day.

This was the day of incidents. In the morning I saw a red deer, a buck with a fine spread of antlers,<sup>34</sup> standing in the rain on the top of the island; but he had scarce seen me rise from under my rock, before he trotted off upon the other side. I supposed he must have swum the straits; though what should bring any creature to Earraid, was more than I could fancy.

A little after, as I was jumping about after my limpets I was startled by a guinea-piece,<sup>35</sup> which fell upon a rock in front of me and glanced off into the sea. When the sailors gave me my money again, they kept back not only about a third of the whole sum, but my father's leather purse; so that from that day out, I carried my gold loose in a pocket with a button. I now saw there must be a hole, and clapped my hand to the place in a great hurry. But this was to lock the stable door after the steed was stolen.<sup>36</sup> I had left the shore at Queensferry with near on<sup>37</sup> fifty pounds; now I found no more than two guinea-pieces and a silver shilling.

It is true I picked up a third guinea a little after, where it lay shining on a piece of turf. That made a fortune of three pounds and four shillings, English money, for a lad, the rightful heir of an estate, and now starving on an isle at the extreme end of the wild Highlands.<sup>38</sup>

This state of my affairs dashed<sup>39</sup> me still further; and indeed my plight on that third morning was truly pitiful. My clothes were beginning to rot; my stockings in particular were quite worn through, so that my shanks<sup>40</sup> went naked; my hands had grown quite soft with the continual soaking; my throat was very sore, my strength had much abated, and my heart so turned against the horrid stuff I was

condemned to eat, that the very sight of it came near to sicken me.

And yet the worst was not yet come.

There is a pretty high rock on the north-west of Earraid, which (because it had a flat top and overlooked the Sound) I was much in the habit of frequenting; not that ever I stayed in one place, save when asleep, my misery giving me no rest. Indeed I wore myself down with continual and aimless goings and comings in the rain.

As soon, however, as the sun came out, I lay down on the top of that rock to dry myself. The comfort of the sunshine is a thing I cannot tell. It set me thinking hopefully of my deliverance, of which I had begun to despair; and I scanned the sea and the Ross with a fresh interest. On the south of my rock, a part of the island jutted out and hid the open ocean, so that a boat could thus come quite near me upon that side, and I be none the wiser.

Well, all of a sudden, a coble<sup>41</sup> with a brown sail and a pair of fishers aboard of it, came flying round that corner of the isle, bound for Iona. I shouted out, and then fell on my knees on the rock and reached up my hands and prayed to them. They were near enough to hear—I could even see the colour of their hair; and there was no doubt but they observed me, for they cried out in the Gaelic<sup>42</sup> tongue, and laughed. But the boat never turned aside, and flew on, right before my eyes, for Iona.

I could not believe such wickedness, and ran along the shore from rock to rock, crying on them piteously; even after they were out of reach of my voice, I still cried and waved to them; and when they were quite gone I thought my heart would have burst. All the time of my troubles I wept only twice. Once, when I could not reach the yard, and now the second time, when these fishers turned a deaf ear to my cries. But this time I wept and roared like a wicked child, tearing up the turf with my nails, and grinding my face in the earth. If a wish would kill men, those two fishers

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would never have seen morning, and I should likely have died upon my island.

When I was a little over <sup>43</sup> my anger, I must eat again, but with such loathing of the mess <sup>44</sup> as I could now scarce control. Sure enough, I should have done as well to fast, for my fishes poisoned me again. I had all my first pains; my throat was so sore I could scarce swallow; I had a fit of strong shuddering, which clucked <sup>45</sup> my teeth together; and there came on me that dreadful sense of illness, which we have no name for either in Scotch or English. I thought I should have died, and made my peace with God, forgiving all men, even my uncle and the fishers; and as soon as I had thus made up my mind to the worst, clearness came upon me; I observed the night was falling dry; my clothes dried a good deal; truly, I was in a better case than ever before, since I had landed on the isle; and so I got to sleep at last, with a thought of gratitude.

The next day (which was the fourth of this horrible life of mine) I found my bodily strength run very low. But the sun shone, the air was sweet, and what I managed to eat of the shell-fish agreed well with me <sup>46</sup> and revived my courage.

I was scarce back on my rock (where I went always the first thing after I had eaten) before I observed a boat coming down the Sound and with her head, as I thought, in my direction.

I began at once to hope and fear exceedingly; for I thought these men might have thought better of <sup>47</sup> their cruelty and be coming back to my assistance. But another disappointment, such as yesterday's, was more than I could bear. I turned my back accordingly, upon the sea, and did not look again till I had counted many hundreds. The boat was still heading for the island. The next time I counted the full thousand, as slowly as I could, my heart beating so as to hurt me. And then it was out of all question. She was coming straight to Earraid!

I could no longer hold myself back, but ran to the seaside



and out, from one rock to another, as far as I could go. It is a marvel I was not drowned; for when I was brought to a stand at last, my legs shook under me, and my mouth was so dry, I must wet it with the sea-water before I was able to shout.

All this time the boat was coming on; and now I was able to perceive it was the same boat and the same two men as yesterday. This I knew by their hair, which the one had of a bright yellow and the other black. But now there was a third man along with them, who looked <sup>48</sup> to be of a better class.

As soon as they were come within easy speech, they let down their sail and lay quiet. In spite of my supplications, they drew no nearer in, and what frightened me most of all, the new man tee-hee'd <sup>49</sup> with laughter as he talked and looked at me.

Then he stood up in the boat and addressed me a long while, speaking fast and with many wavings of his hand. I told him I had no Gaelic; and at this he became very angry, and I began to suspect he thought he was talking English. Listening very close, I caught the word "whateffer", <sup>50</sup> several times; but all the rest was Gaelic and might have been Greek and Hebrew for me. <sup>51</sup>

"Whatever," said I, to show him I had caught a word.

"Yes, yes—yes, yes," says he, and then he looked at the other men, as much as to say, "I told you I spoke English," and began again as hard as ever in the Gaelic.

This time I picked out another word, "tide". Then I had a flash of hope. I remembered he was always waving his hand towards the mainland of the Ross.

"Do you mean when the tide is out——?" I cried, and could not finish.

"Yes, yes," said he. "Tide."

At that I turned tail upon <sup>52</sup> their boat (where my adviser had once more begun to tee-hee with laughter), and leaped back the way I had come, from one stone to another, and

set off running across the isle as I had never run before. In about half an hour I came out upon the shores of the creek; and, sure enough, it was shrunk into a little trickle of water, through which I dashed, not above my knees,<sup>53</sup> and landed with a shout on the main island.

A sea-bred boy would not have stayed a day on Earraid; which is only what they call a tidal islet,<sup>54</sup> and, except in the bottom of the neaps,<sup>55</sup> can be entered and left twice in every twenty-four hours, either dry-shod, or at the most by wading.<sup>56</sup> Even I, who had the tide going out and in before me in the bay, and even watched for the ebbs, the better to get my shell-fish—even I (I say) if I had sat down to think, instead of raging at my fate, must have soon guessed the secret, and got free. It was no wonder the fishers had not understood me. The wonder was rather that they had ever guessed my pitiful illusion, and taken the trouble to come back. I had starved with cold and hunger on that island for close upon one hundred hours. But for the fishers, I might have left my bones there, in pure folly. And even as it was, I had paid for it pretty dear, not only in past sufferings, but in my present case; being clothed like a beggarman, scarce able to walk, and in great pain of my sore throat.

I have seen wicked men and fools, a great many of both; and I believe they both get paid<sup>57</sup> in the end; but the fools first.

#### NOTES

1. When I reached dry land.

2. Although about sixty years had elapsed since the Stewart King, James II, had fled during the Revolution of 1688, there were still many in Britain, especially in the Highlands of Scotland, who refused to acknowledge George II as King, and supported the claims of "Bonnie Prince Charlie", i.e. Charles Edward, grandson of James II. One of his followers, Alan Breck, while engaged in collecting money from the Scottish Highlanders for the support of the exiled "Prince", sailed among the islands on the West Coast of Scotland. One night during a fog his boat was struck by *The Covenant* (the ship in which

David Balfour was sailing) and was sunk. Alan Breck, the only survivor, was rescued by *The Covenant*. The captain and crew formed a plan to kill Alan and seize his money; but David told him of the plot and helped him to defend himself successfully. Thus Alan and David formed a fast friendship.

3. Climb with hands and feet over rough ground.
4. *The Covenant*.
5. Line of sharp rocks.
6. Every ship carries one or more rowing-boats, in which the crew takes refuge if the ship sinks.
7. As the combined result of.
8. Round.
9. At the south-west point of the island of Mull.
10. Between (the rocks).
11. Expected.
12. Idiom. "Till even my head was below the water."
13. When the ship sank, David had saved his life by laying hold of a "yard" (i.e. wooden pole which supports the sail) which enabled him to float.
14. Strongly flowing tide.
15. Adjective of "peat" (i.e. soil composed of decomposed vegetable matter which is used as fuel).
16. The soft ground where the peat lies.
17. Moving up and down with the movement of the water.
18. See note 2.
19. While still on the ship, Alan had cut off a silver button from his coat, and given it to David, telling him that all Alan Breck's friends would come to help him whenever they saw it.
20. Brought up in the interior, away from the sea coast.
21. A shell-fish that sticks to rocks, and can hardly be removed unless taken by surprise.
22. We Scots.
23. Unsuccessful attempt to vomit.
24. Piece of bread steeped in milk or other liquid.
25. Birds hunted for sport.
26. Strait (between the small island of Iona and Mull).
27. At low tide (when the sea had left the upper part of the shore comparatively dry).
28. Two gallons (in the measure used for "dry" goods).
29. A small island off the S.W. coast of Mull, just north of Earraid.
30. Become half-mad.
31. Friendship (of the family gathered round the fire).
32. Aggravated; made more severe.
33. During the Commonwealth, Charles was crowned king by

the Scots in January, 1651, and in August entered England at the head of 10,000 Scots. He got as far as Worcester where his forces were routed by Cromwell. He wandered as a fugitive for six weeks before he escaped from the country.

34. Branching horns.

35. The gold coin called the guinea has not been coined since 1813; but professional men still sometimes reckon their charges in guineas. The value is 21 shillings.

36. The reference is to a well-known proverb, which means to take great care after the mischief has been done.

37. Colloquial for "nearly".

38. The point farthest west, and therefore farthest from the Capital, Edinburgh.

39. Dispirited; diminished (my) courage.

40. Colloquial for "legs".

41. A Scots word for a fishing-boat (pronounce to rhyme with "noble").

42. The language of the Scottish Highlands (still largely spoken there).

43. Had somewhat subdued.

44. Food (here used contemptuously).

45. An imitative word. "Brought my teeth together with a sound such as a hen makes".

46. Was easily digested.

47. Repented of.

48. Appeared.

49. An imitative word (representing the sound of contemptuous laughter).

50. The Highlander's way of pronouncing the word "whatever" which occurs very often in translations from the Gaelic.

51. As far as I was concerned. (I understood no more of what he said than I would have understood if he had spoken Greek or Hebrew.)

## QUESTIONS

1. Compare the position of David Balfour on Earraid with that of Robinson Crusoe on his desert island.
2. What difference would it have made to David if he had been a Boy Scout, or if he had been educated in a modern High School?
3. Tell the story of David as the two fishermen would tell it when they reached home, after they saw him for the first time.
4. Would you call Stevenson a good story-teller? Explain why you give the answer you do.
5. Do you think boys or girls, living in the interior of a country, should be encouraged to read sea stories?



## Charles Reade

*The Cloister and the Hearth*, by Charles Reade, an English novelist, is undoubtedly one of the very greatest of historical novels in the English language. Besides telling the beautiful and pathetic love story of Gerard and Margaret, it describes, with much humour and dramatic power, life in certain European countries in the latter part of the fifteenth century.

Gerard was the son of a merchant who lived in the village of Tergou in Holland. His father intended him to be a clergyman, which meant that, according to the cruel custom of the time, he could not marry. He fell in love with Margaret, daughter of a physician in the neighbouring village of Sevenbergen. Gerard determined to abandon his profession and marry Margaret. This brought on him the wrath of two people. His father was angry, because if Gerard married, he could not become a clergyman, as his father was determined that he should. But the burgomaster (or, as we should say, the President of the Municipality) was even more enraged; for he was hiding a document that showed that Margaret was heiress to an estate, which in the meantime he was keeping for himself. He feared that if Gerard married Margaret, he would one day discover the fraud, and insist on Margaret getting her rights. In those days fathers had terrible power over their children. Gerard's father could have imprisoned him for disobedience; but probably would never have done so. But in his absence the burgomaster, pretending that he was acting for the father, actually imprisoned Gerard to prevent the marriage.

The extract relates the familiar ruse by which Margaret, aided by the old archer, Martin, enabled Gerard to escape. Gerard's lame sister, Kate, who loved him dearly, also came with their athletic, but dwarf brother, Giles, to set him free; but the work was done before they arrived.

## GERARD'S ESCAPE FROM PRISON

As the sun declined, Gerard's heart too sank and sank; with the waning light even the embers of hope went out. He was faint, too, with hunger; for he was afraid to eat the food Ghysbrecht<sup>1</sup> had brought him; and hunger alone crows<sup>2</sup> men. He sat upon the chest, his arms and his head drooping before him, a picture of despondency. Suddenly something struck the wall beyond him very sharply, and then rattled on the floor at his feet. It was an arrow; he saw the white feather. A chill ran through him—they meant then to assassinate him from the outside. He crouched. No more missiles came. He crawled on all fours, and took up the arrow; there was no head to it. He uttered a cry of hope: had a friendly hand shot it? He took it up, and felt it all over: he found a soft substance attached to it. Then one of his eccentricities<sup>3</sup> was of grand use to him. His tinder-box<sup>4</sup> enabled him to strike a light: it showed him two things that made his heart bound with delight, none the less thrilling for being<sup>5</sup> somewhat vague. Attached to the arrow was a skein of silk, and on the arrow itself were words written.

How his eyes devoured them, his heart panting the while.

WELL BELOVED, MAKE FAST THE SILK TO THY KNIFE AND LOWER TO US: BUT HOLD THINE END FAST: THEN COUNT AN<sup>6</sup> HUNDRED AND DRAW UP.

Gerard seized the oak chest, and with almost superhuman energy dragged it to the window: a moment ago he could not have moved it. Standing on the chest and looking down, he saw figures at the tower foot. They were so indistinct, they looked like one huge form. He waved his bonnet to them with trembling hand: then he undid the silk rapidly but carefully, and made<sup>7</sup> one end fast<sup>7</sup> to his knife and lowered it till it ceased to draw. Then he counted a hundred. Then pulled the silk carefully up: it came up a little heavier. At last he came to a large knot, and by that knot a stout whip-

cord was attached to the silk. What could this mean? While he was puzzling himself Margaret's voice came up to him, low but clear. "Draw up, Gerard, till you see liberty." At the word, Gerard drew the whipcord line up, and drew and drew till he came to another knot, and found a cord of some thickness take the place of the whipcord. He had no sooner begun to draw this up, than he found that he had now a heavy weight to deal with.

Then the truth suddenly flashed on him, and he went to work and pulled and pulled till the perspiration rolled down him: the weight got heavier and heavier, and at last he was well-nigh exhausted: looking down, he saw in the moonlight a sight that revived him: it was as it were a great snake coming up to him out of the deep shadow cast by the tower. He gave a shout of joy, and a score more wild pulls, and lo! a stout new rope touched his hand: he hauled and hauled, and dragged the end into his prison, and instantly passed it through both handles of the chest in succession, and knotted it firmly; then sat for a moment to recover his breath and collect his courage. The first thing was to make sure that the chest was sound, and capable of resisting his weight poised in mid-air. He jumped with all his force upon it. At the third jump the whole side burst open, and out scuttled <sup>8</sup> the contents, a host of parchments.<sup>9</sup>

After the first start<sup>10</sup> and misgiving<sup>11</sup> this gave him, Gerard comprehended that the chest had not burst, but opened: he had doubtless jumped upon some secret spring. Still it shook in some degree his confidence in the chest's powers of resistance; so he gave it an ally: he took the iron bar and fastened it with the small rope across the large rope, and across the window. He now mounted the chest, and from the chest, put his foot through the window, and sat half in and half out, with one hand on that part of the rope which was inside. In the silent night he heard his own heart beat.

The free air breathed on his face, and gave him the courage to

risk what we must all lose one day—for liberty. Many dangers awaited him, but the greatest was the first getting on to the rope outside. Gerard reflected. Finally, he put himself in the attitude of a swimmer, his body to the waist being in the prison, his legs outside. Then holding the inside rope with both hands, he felt anxiously with his feet for the outside rope, and when he had got it, he worked it in between the palms<sup>12</sup> of his feet, and kept it there tight: then he uttered a short prayer, and, all the calmer for it, put his left hand on the sill<sup>13</sup> and gradually wriggled out. Then he seized the iron bar, and for one fearful moment hung outside from it by his right hand, while his left hand felt for the rope down at his knees; it was too tight against the wall for his fingers to get round it higher up. The moment he had fairly grasped it, he left the bar, and swiftly seized the rope with the right hand too; but in this manœuvre his body necessarily fell about a yard. A stifled cry came up from below. Gerard hung in mid-air. He clenched his teeth, and nipped<sup>14</sup> the rope tight with his feet and gripped it with his hands, and went down slowly hand below hand.<sup>15</sup> He passed by one huge rough stone after another. He saw there was green moss on one. He looked up and he looked down. The moon shone into his prison window: it seemed very near. The fluttering figures below seemed an awful distance. It made him dizzy to look down: so he fixed his eyes steadily on the wall close to him, and went slowly down, down, down.

He passed a rusty, slimy streak on the wall: it was some ten feet long. The rope made his hands very hot. He stole another look up.

The prison window was a good way off now.

Down—down—down—down.

The rope made his hands sore.

He looked up. The window was so distant, he ventured now to turn his eyes downward again; and there, not more than thirty feet below him, were Margaret and Martin, their faithful hands upstretched to catch him should he

fall. He could see their eyes and their teeth shine in the moonlight. For their mouths were open, and they were breathing hard.

"Take care, Gerard! oh, take care! Look not down."

"Fear me not," cried Gerard joyfully, and eyed the wall, but came down faster.

In another minute his feet were at their hands. They seized him ere he touched the ground, and all three clung together in one embrace.

"Hush! away in silence, dear one."

They stole <sup>16</sup> along the shadow of the wall.

Now, ere they had gone many yards, suddenly a stream of light shot from an angle of the building, and lay across their path like a barrier of fire, and they heard whispers and footsteps close at hand.

"Back!" hissed Martin. "Keep in the shade."

They hurried back, passed the dangling rope, and made for a little square projecting tower. They had barely rounded <sup>17</sup> it when the light shot trembling past them, and flickered uncertainly into the distance.

"A lantern!" groaned Martin in a whisper. "They are after us."

"Give me my knife," whispered Gerard. "I'll never be taken alive."

"No, no!" murmured Margaret; "is there no way out where we are?"

"None! none! But I carry six lives at my shoulder;" <sup>18</sup> and with the word, Martin strung his bow, and fitted an arrow to the string: "in war never wait to be struck: I will kill one or two ere they shall know where their death comes from:" then, motioning his companions to be quiet, he began to draw his bow, and, ere the arrow was quite drawn to the head, he glided round the corner, ready to loose the string the moment the enemy should offer a mark. <sup>19</sup>

Gerard and Margaret held their breath in horrible expectation: they had never seen a human being killed.



And now a wild hope, but half repressed, thrilled through Gerard, that this watchful enemy might be the burgomaster in person. The soldier, he knew, would send an arrow through a burgher<sup>20</sup> or burgomaster, as he would through a boar in a wood.

But who may foretell the future, however near? The bow, instead of remaining firm, and loosing the deadly shaft, was seen to waver first, then shake violently, and the stout soldier staggered back to them, his knees knocking and his cheeks blanched with fear. He let his arrow fall, and clutched Gerard's shoulder.

"Let me feel flesh and blood," he gasped. "The haunted tower! the haunted tower!"<sup>21</sup>

His terror communicated itself to Margaret and Gerard. They gasped rather than uttered an inquiry.

"Hush!" he cried, ~~as it will hear you.~~ *Up* the wall! it is going *up* the wall! ~~led head is on fire.~~ *Up* the wall, as mortal creatures walk ~~upon~~ *up* green sward.<sup>22</sup> If you know a prayer, say it, for hell is loose<sup>23</sup> to-night."

"I have power to exorcise spirits,"<sup>24</sup> said Gerard, trembling. "I will venture forth."

"Go alone, then!" said Martin; "I have looked on't once, and live."<sup>25</sup>

Kate and Giles soon reached the haunted tower. Judge their surprise when they found a new rope dangling from the prisoner's window to the ground.

"I see how it is," said the inferior intelligence,<sup>26</sup> taking facts as they came. "Our Gerard has come down this rope. He has got clear. *Up* I go, and see."

"No, Giles, no!" said the superior intelligence,<sup>27</sup> blinded by prejudice. "See you not this is glamour?<sup>28</sup> This rope is a line the evil one casts out to wile<sup>29</sup> thee to destruction. He knows the weaknesses of all our hearts; he has seen how fond you are of going up things. Where should<sup>30</sup> our Gerard procure a rope? how fasten it in the sky like this? It is

not nature. Holy saints, protect us this night, for hell is abroad." <sup>31</sup>

"Stuff!" <sup>32</sup> said the dwarf; "the way to hell is down, and this rope leads up. I never had the luck to go up such a long rope. It may be years ere I fall in with such a long rope all ready hung for me. As well be knocked on the head at once as never know happiness."

And he sprung on to the rope with a cry of delight, as a cat jumps with a mew on to a table where fish is. All the gymnast was on fire; <sup>33</sup> and the only concession Kate could gain from him was permission to fasten the lantern on his neck first.

"A light scares the ill spirits," <sup>34</sup> said she.

And so, with his huge arms, and his legs like feathers, Giles went up the rope faster than his brother came down it. The light at the nape of his neck made a glowworm of him. <sup>35</sup> His sister watched his progress with trembling anxiety. Suddenly a female figure started out of the solid masonry, and came flying at her with more than mortal velocity.

Kate uttered a feeble cry. It was all she could, for her tongue clove to her palate <sup>36</sup> with terror. Then she dropped her crutches, and sank upon her knees, hiding her face and moaning:

"Take my body, but spare my soul!"

*Margaret* (panting). "Why, it is a woman!"

*Kate* (quivering). "Why, it is a woman!"

*Margaret*. "How you scared me!"

*Kate*. "I am scared enough myself. Oh! oh! oh!"

"This is strange! But the fiery-headed thing? Yet it was with you, and you are harmless! But why are you here at this time of night?"

"Nay, why are *you*?"

"Perhaps we are on the same errand? Ah! you are his *good* sister, Kate."

"And you are Margaret Brandt."

"Yea."

"All the better. You love him: you are here. Then Giles was right. He has won free." <sup>37</sup>

## NOTES

1. The burgomaster.
2. Makes cowards.
3. Peculiar habits. (Read the next sentence, and then say what this eccentricity was.)
4. These boxes contained flint, steel, and some tinder (i.e. dry substance which would readily catch fire). There were no matches in those days.
5. Because they were.
6. As this is a story of the olden times, the author uses the old form "an hundred" where we say "a hundred".
7. To "make fast" is to "fasten".
8. Fell in wild confusion. ("Contents" is nominative.)
9. Skins of animals used in those days as writing material. (Gerard wrote beautifully, and was always anxious to get more parchments to write on, but they were expensive.)
10. Sudden movement of surprise.
11. Doubt. (He was for a moment afraid that the chest was not strong enough to support his weight.)
12. We usually speak of the "palms" of the hands and the "soles" of the feet.
13. The wooden shelf at the base of a window.
14. Gripped tightly.
15. The opposite of the "hand-over-hand" movement by which one climbs up a rope.
16. Went stealthily.
17. Gone round.
18. Have six arrows ready to fit to the bow-string which I draw back to my shoulder when I shoot. Each arrow will kill an enemy.
19. Should appear and so could be shot at. ("Mark" means "target".)
20. Citizen.
21. Some word like "remember" is understood. The tower in which Gerard had been imprisoned was supposed to be haunted by evil spirits.
22. Grassy ground.
23. The evil spirits, usually confined in hell, have been allowed to wander freely about the earth.
24. To drive out evil spirits. (According to the superstitious

ideas of the time, many diseases of body or mind were caused by demons taking possession of human beings. Certain priests were supposed to have the power of driving them out.)

25. And yet I have not been destroyed; (but I could not expect to be so fortunate if I faced the danger a second time).

26. Giles. The dwarf, though inferior in intelligence to his sister, yet used his common sense and saw things as they were.

27. Kate. Though cleverer than her brother, she allowed her superstitious ideas to deceive her about the facts.

28. Magic (that makes us see imaginary things).

29. Entice; lead by guile.

30. Could.

31. See 23.

32. Nonsense!

33. "All the gymnast" means "all that part of his nature which loved gymnastic exercises". "Was on fire" means "was full of eagerness".

34. This was one of the superstitions of the time.

35. Turned him into a glowworm; made him look like a glowworm.

36. The roof of the mouth.

37. Escaped.

### QUESTIONS

1. Tell the story of any other escape from prison that you remember.
2. Tell the story of Gerard's escape as he himself would have told it.
3. What do you know about the belief in demons in ancient or modern times? What harm do such beliefs cause?
4. How do superstitious beliefs arise? Discuss the best means of destroying them.
5. Do you consider Charles Reade a good story-teller? Give your reasons for your answer.
6. Have you noted any humorous touches in the story?

## Jerome K. Jerome

"The Maze" is taken from *Three Men in a Boat* (first published in 1889), the most popular book of Jerome K. Jerome, novelist, humorist, and practical philosopher. It describes a holiday spent by three friends, George, Harris, and the author, in rowing up the Thames from Kingston to Oxford. The humour which is so largely responsible for the immense sale the book has had, consists largely of playful exaggeration, of descriptions of practical jokes, and of accounts of people placed in absurd situations, very amusing to all but the victim. The story of Harris's visit to "The Maze" was told by him to the author in the boat on the first day of the holiday. George, who was a bank clerk and could not get leave for that day, did the first part of the journey by train and joined the boat later in the day at Shepperton, farther up the river.

### THE MAZE

Harris asked me if I'd ever been in the maze<sup>1</sup> at Hampton Court.<sup>2</sup> He said he went in once to show somebody else the way. He had studied it up in a map, and it was so simple that it seemed foolish—hardly worth the twopence<sup>3</sup> charged for admission. Harris said he thought that map must have been got up as a practical joke,<sup>4</sup> because it wasn't a bit like the real thing, and only misleading. It was a country cousin that Harris took in. He said:

"We'll just go in here, so that you can say you've been,<sup>5</sup> but it's very simple. It's absurd to call it a maze. You keep on taking the first turning to the right. We'll just walk round for ten minutes, and then go and get some lunch."

They met some people soon after they had got inside,



who said they had been there for three-quarters of an hour, and had had about enough of it. Harris told them they could follow him, if they liked; he was just going in, and then should turn round and come out again. They said it was very kind of him, and fell behind, and followed.

They picked up various other people who wanted to get it over, as they went along, until they had absorbed all the persons in the maze. People who had given up all hope of ever getting either in or out, or of ever seeing their home and friends again, plucked up courage at the sight of Harris and his party, and joined the procession, blessing him. Harris said he should judge there must have been twenty people following him, in all; and one woman with a baby, who had been there all the morning, insisted on taking his arm for fear of losing him.

Harris kept on turning to the right, but it seemed a long way, and his cousin said he supposed it was a very big maze.

"Oh, one of the largest in Europe," said Harris.

"Yes, it must be," replied the cousin, "because we've walked a good two miles already."

Harris began to think it rather strange himself, but he held on until, at last, they passed the half of a penny bun<sup>6</sup> on the ground that Harris's cousin swore he had noticed there seven minutes ago. Harris said: "Oh, impossible!" but the woman with the baby said, "Not at all," as she herself had taken it from the child, and thrown it down there, just before she met Harris. She also added that she wished she had never met Harris, and expressed an opinion that he was an impostor. That made Harris mad, and he produced his map, and explained his theory.

"The map may be all right enough," said one of the party, "if you know whereabouts in it we are now."

Harris didn't know, and suggested that the best thing to do would be to go back to the entrance, and begin again. For the beginning again part of it there was not much enthusiasm; but with regard to the advisability of going back

to the entrance there was complete unanimity, and so they turned, and trailed after Harris again, in the opposite direction. About ten minutes more passed, and then they found themselves in the centre.

Harris thought at first of pretending that that was what he had been aiming at; but the crowd looked dangerous,<sup>7</sup> and he decided to treat it as an accident.

Anyhow, they had got something to start from then. They did know where they were, and the map was once more consulted, and the thing seemed simpler than ever, and off they started for the third time.

And three minutes later they were back in the centre again.

After that, they simply couldn't get anywhere else. Whatever way they turned brought them back to the middle. It became so regular at length, that some of the people stopped there, and waited for the others to take a walk round, and come back to them. Harris drew out his map again, after a while, but the sight of it only infuriated the mob, and they told him to go and curl his hair with it.<sup>8</sup> Harris said that he couldn't help feeling that, to a certain extent, he had become unpopular.

They all got crazy at last, and sang out for<sup>9</sup> the keeper, and the man came and climbed up the ladder outside, and shouted out directions to them. But all their heads were, by this time, in such a confused whirl that they were incapable of grasping anything, and so the man told them to stop where they were, and he would come to them. They huddled together, and waited; and he climbed down, and came in.

He was a young keeper, as luck would have it, and new to the business; and when he got in, he couldn't get to them, and then *he* got lost. They caught sight of him, every now and then, rushing about the other side of the hedge, and he would see them, and rush to get to them, and they would wait there for about five minutes, and then he would reappear again in exactly the same spot, and ask them where they had been.

They had to wait till one of the old keepers came back from his dinner before they got out.

Harris said he thought it was a very fine maze, so far as he was a judge; and we agreed that we would try to get George<sup>10</sup> to go into it, on our way back.

### NOTES

1. A maze is an enclosure full of paths so cleverly arranged that, when one enters, it is very difficult to find one's way out again.

2. On the Thames near London; at one time a royal palace, now used as private dwelling houses. The maze is in the palace gardens.

3. Pronounce "tuppns". A penny is worth about an anna.

4. A joke which consists in putting someone into a ridiculous position.

5. Been there; visited the place.

6. A small round cake.

7. The author humorously says that the crowd looked as if they were going to attack Harris.

8. They contemptuously told him to tear the plan into pieces and use the pieces as hair curlers. Girls formerly made their hair curl by inserting pieces of paper and wrapping ringlets round these pieces.

9. Loudly called.

10. The third friend, who had not yet arrived.

### QUESTIONS

1. What parts of this passage have you found most amusing?

2. Is it correct to say that in every case the humour consists in someone being made to look absurd in the eyes of others?

3. In the passages you have read in this volume, can you remember any humour that is not of this type?

## Fridtjof Nansen

"An Adventure with a Bear" is taken from the first volume of the English translation of *Farthest North*; the book in which Fridtjof Nansen, Norwegian explorer and statesman, tells the story of his attempt to find the North Pole. The ship in which he sailed was called the *Fram* (a Norwegian word meaning "forward"). Nansen knew that one of the chief dangers was that his ship would be crushed in the ice of the northern seas. Accordingly the *Fram* was built in such a way as to prevent this happening. The sides of the ship were made of great strength; and were so shaped that masses of ice, when coming in contact with the ship, would not crush it but only lift it. The ice-floes (masses of ice) would simply slip beneath the ship.

Nansen sailed from Christiania on 24th June, 1893. On 22nd September, the *Fram* became fastened to an ice-floe. On 14th March, 1895, Nansen left the ship with a companion, and started on foot over the ice towards the Pole. He did not actually discover the Pole; but he reached a higher latitude than had been reached by any previous explorer. He returned to Norway on 13th August, 1896, and the *Fram* arrived safely a week later.

Nansen tells the exciting story of his journey in diary form in *Farthest North*. When the book was published, it attracted very great attention. It is always interesting to get the story of a brave man's adventures from his own pen.

### AN ADVENTURE WITH A BEAR

*Tuesday, December 12th.*—Had a long walk south-east this morning. The ice is in much the same condition there as it is to the west, packed or pressed up into mounds, with flat floes<sup>1</sup> between. This evening the dogs suddenly began to make a great commotion on deck. We were all deep in cards,<sup>2</sup>

some playing whist,<sup>3</sup> others "marriage".<sup>3</sup> I had no shoes on, so said that someone else must go up and see what was the matter. Mogstad<sup>4</sup> went. The noise grew worse and worse. Presently Mogstad came down and said that all the dogs that could get at the rail<sup>5</sup> were up on it, barking out into the dark towards the north. He was sure there must be an animal of some sort there, but perhaps it was only a fox, for he thought he had heard the bark of a fox far in the north; but he was not sure. Well, it must be the devil of a fox<sup>6</sup> to excite the dogs like that. As the disturbance continued, I at last went up myself, followed by Johansen.<sup>7</sup> From different positions we looked long and hard into the darkness in the direction in which the dogs were barking, but we could see nothing moving. That something must be there was quite certain; and I had no doubt that it was a bear, for the dogs were almost beside themselves.<sup>8</sup>

"Pan"<sup>9</sup> looked up into my face with an odd expression, as if he had something important to tell me, and then jumped up on the rail and barked away to the north. The dogs' excitement was quite remarkable; they had not been so keen when the bear was close in to the side of the ship. However, I contented myself with remarking that the thing to do would be to loose some dogs and go north with them over the ice. But these wretched<sup>10</sup> dogs won't tackle a bear, and besides, it is so dark that there is hardly a chance of finding anything. If it is a bear he will come again. At this season, when he is so hungry, he will hardly go right away from all the good food for him here on board. I struck about with<sup>11</sup> my arms to get a little heat into me, then went below<sup>12</sup> and to bed. The dogs went on barking, sometimes louder than before. Nordahl,<sup>13</sup> whose watch<sup>14</sup> it was, went up several times, but could discover no reason for it. As I was lying reading in my berth<sup>15</sup> I heard a peculiar sound; it was like boxes being dragged about on deck, and there was also scraping, like a dog that wanted to get out, scratching violently at a door. I thought of "Kvik",<sup>16</sup> who was shut



up in the chart-room.<sup>17</sup> I called into the saloon<sup>18</sup> to Nordahl that he had better go up again and see what this new noise was. He did so, but came back saying that there was still nothing to be seen.

It was difficult to sleep, and I lay long tossing about. Peter<sup>19</sup> came on watch. I told him to go up and turn the air-sail<sup>20</sup> to the wind, to make the ventilation better. He was a good time on deck doing this and other things, but he also could see no reason for the to-do<sup>21</sup> the dogs were still making. He had to go forward,<sup>22</sup> and then noticed that the three dogs nearest the starboard<sup>23</sup> gangway<sup>24</sup> were missing. He came down and told me, and we agreed that possibly this might be what all the excitement was about; but never before had they taken it so to heart<sup>25</sup> when some of their number had run away. At last I fell asleep, but heard them in my sleep for a long time.

*Wednesday, December 13th.*—Before I was rightly awake this morning I heard the dogs "at it"<sup>26</sup> still, and the noise went on all the time of breakfast, and had, I believe, gone on all night. After breakfast Mogstad and Peter went up to feed the wretched creatures and let them loose on the ice. Three were still missing. Peter came down to get a lantern; he thought he might as well look if there were any tracks of animals. Jacobsen<sup>27</sup> called after him that he had better take a gun. No, he did not need one, he said. A little later, as I was sitting sorrowfully absorbed in the calculation of how much petroleum we have used, and how short a time our supply will last if we go on burning it at the same rate, I heard a scream at the top of the companion.<sup>28</sup> "Come with a gun." In a moment I was in the saloon, and there was Peter tumbling in at the door, breathlessly shouting, "A gun! a gun!"

The bear had bitten him in the side. I was thankful that it was no worse; hearing him put on so much dialect,<sup>29</sup> I had thought it was a matter of life and death. I seized one gun, he another, and up we rushed, the mate<sup>30</sup> with his gun after us. There was not much difficulty in knowing in

what direction to turn, for from the rail on the starboard side came confused shouts of human voices, and from the ice below the gangway the sound of a frightful uproar of dogs. I tore out the tow-plug<sup>31</sup> at the muzzle of my rifle, then up with<sup>32</sup> the lever and in with<sup>33</sup> the cartridge; it was a case of hurry.<sup>34</sup> But, hang it!<sup>35</sup> there is a plug in at this end too. I poked and poked, but could not get a grip of it. Peter screamed: "Shoot, shoot! mine won't go off!" He stood clicking<sup>36</sup> and clicking, his lock<sup>37</sup> full of frozen vaseline again, while the bear lay chewing at a dog just below us at the ship's side.

Beside me stood the mate, groping after a tow-plug which he also had shoved down into his gun, but now he flung the gun angrily away and began to look round the deck for a walrus spear<sup>38</sup> to stick<sup>39</sup> the bear with. Our fourth man, Mogstad, was waving an empty rifle (he had shot away his cartridges), and shouting to someone to shoot the bear. Four men, and not one that could shoot, although we could have prodded the bear's back with our gun-barrels.<sup>40</sup> Hansen making a fifth, was lying in the passage to the chart-room, groping with his arm through a chink in the door for cartridges; he could not get the door to open because of "Kvik's" kennel.<sup>41</sup>

At last Johansen appeared and sent a ball right down into the bear's hide. That did some good. The monster let go the dog and gave a growl. Another shot flashed and hissed down on the same spot. One more, and we saw the white dog the bear had under him jump up and run off, while the other dogs stood round, barking. Another shot still, for the animal began to stir a little. At this moment my plug came out, and I gave him a last ball through the head to make sure. The dogs had crowded round barking as long as he moved, but now that he lay still in death, they drew back terrified. They probably thought it was some new ruse of the enemy. It was a little thin, one-year-old bear that had caused all this terrible commotion.

Whilst it was being flayed, I went off in a north-westerly direction to look for the dogs that were still missing. I had not gone far when I noticed that the dogs that were following me had caught scent of something to the north, and wanted to go that way. Soon they got frightened, and I could not get them to go on; they kept close in to my side, or slunk behind me. I held my gun ready, while I crawled on all fours<sup>42</sup> over the pack-ice,<sup>43</sup> which was anything but level. I kept a steady look-out ahead, but it was not far my eyes could pierce in that darkness. I could only just see the dogs, like black shadows, when they were a few steps away from me. I expected every moment to see a huge form rise among the hummocks<sup>44</sup> ahead, or come rushing towards me. The dogs got more and more cautious, one or two of them sat down, but they probably felt that it would be a shame to let me go on alone, so followed slowly after.

Terrible ice to force one's way over! Crawling along on hands and knees does not put one in a very convenient position to shoot from if the bear should make a sudden rush. But unless he did this, or attacked the dogs, I had no hope of getting him. We now came out on some flat ice. It was only too evident that there must be something quite near now. I went on, and presently saw a dark object on the ice in front of me. It was not unlike an animal. I bent down—it was poor "Johansen's Friend", the black dog with the white tip to his tail, in a sad state, and frozen stiff.<sup>45</sup> Beside him was something else dark. I bent down again and found the second of the missing dogs, brother of the corpse-watcher "Suggen".<sup>46</sup> This one was almost whole, only eaten a little about the head, and it was not frozen quite stiff. There seemed to be blood all round on the ice. I looked about in every direction, but there was nothing more to be seen. The dogs stood at a respectful distance, staring and sniffing in the direction of their dead comrades. Some of us went not long after this to fetch the dogs' carcasses, taking a lantern to look for bear-tracks, in case there had been some big

fellows along with the little one. We scrambled on among the pack-ice. "Come this way with the lantern, Bentzen; I think I see tracks here." Bentzen came, and we turned the light on some indentations in the snow; they were bear-paw marks sure enough, but only the same little fellow's. "Look! the brute has been dragging a dog after him here." By the light of the lantern we traced the blood-marked path on among the hummocks.

We found the dead dogs, but no footprints except small ones, which we all thought must be those of our little bear. "Svarten" alias <sup>47</sup> "Johansen's Friend", <sup>48</sup> looked bad in the lantern-light. Flesh and skin and entrails were gone; there was nothing to be seen but a bare breast and backbone, with some stumps of ribs. It was a pity that the fine strong dog should come to such an end. He had just one fault: he was rather bad-tempered. He had a special dislike to Johansen; barked and showed his teeth whenever he came on deck, or even opened a door, and when he sat whistling in the top, <sup>49</sup> or in the crow's-nest <sup>50</sup> these dark winter days, the "Friend" would answer with a howl of rage from far out on the ice. Johansen bent down with the lantern to look at the remains.

"Are you glad, Johansen, that your enemy is done for?"

"No, I am sorry."

"Why?"

"Because we did not make it up <sup>51</sup> before he died." And we went on to look for more bear-tracks, but found none; so we took the dead dogs on our backs and turned homewards.

On the way I asked Peter what had really happened with him and the bear. "Well, you see," said he, "when I came along with the lantern we saw a few drops of blood by the gangway; <sup>52</sup> but that might quite well have been a dog that had cut itself. On the ice below the gangway we saw some bear-tracks, and we started away west, the whole pack of dogs with us, running on far ahead. When we had got away a

bit from the ship, there was suddenly an awful row in front, and it wasn't long before a great beast came rushing at us, with the whole troop of dogs around it. As soon as we saw what it was, we turned and ran our best for the ship. Mogstad, you see, he<sup>53</sup> had moccasins<sup>54</sup> on, and knew his way better and got there before me. I couldn't get along so fast with my great wooden shoes, and in my confusion I got right on to the big hummock to the west of the ship's bow, you know.

"I turned here and lighted back to see if the bear was behind me, but I saw nothing and pushed on again, and in a minute these slippery wooden shoes had me flat on my back<sup>55</sup> among the hummocks. I was up again quick enough; but when I got down on to the flat ice close to the ship, I saw something coming straight for me on the right-hand side. First I thought it was a dog—it's not so easy to see in the dark, you know—I had no time for a second thought, for the beast jumped on me and bit me in the side. I had lifted my arm like this, you see, and so he caught me here, right on the hip. He growled and hissed as he bit."

"What did you think then, Peter?"

"What did I think? I thought it was all up with me.<sup>56</sup> What was I to do? I had neither gun nor knife. But I took the lantern and gave him such a whack on the head with it that the thing<sup>57</sup> broke, and went flying away over the ice. The moment he felt the blow he sat down and looked at me. I was just taking to my heels<sup>58</sup> when he got up; I don't know whether it was to grip me again or what it was for, but anyhow at that minute he caught sight of a dog coming, and set off after it, and I got on board."

"Did you scream, Peter?"

"Scream! I screamed with all my might." And apparently this was true, for he was quite hoarse.

"But where was Mogstad all this time?"

"Well, you see, he had reached the ship long before me; but he never thought of running down and giving the alarm,



but takes <sup>59</sup> his gun from the round-house <sup>60</sup> wall and thinks he'll manage all right alone. But his gun wouldn't go off, and the bear would have had time to eat me up before his nose." <sup>61</sup>

We were now near the ship, and Mogstad, who had heard the last part of the story from the deck, corrected it in so far that he had just reached the gangway when Peter began to roar. He jumped up and fell back three times before he got on board, and had no time to do anything then but to seize his gun and go to Peter's assistance.

When the bear left Peter and rushed after the dogs, he soon had the whole pack about him again. Now he would make a spring and get one below him; but then all the rest would set upon him and jump on his back, so that he had to turn to defend himself. Then he would spring upon another dog, and the whole pack would be on him again. And so the dance went on, backwards and forwards over the ice, until they were once more close to the ship. A dog stood there, below the gangway, wanting to get on board; the bear made a spring on it, and it was there, by the ship's side, that the villain met his fate.

An examination on board showed that the hook of "Svar-ten's" leash was pulled out quite straight; "Gammelen's" was broken through; but the third dog's was only wrenched a little: it hardly looked as if the bear had done it. I had a slight hope that this dog might still be alive, but, though we searched well, we could not find it.

It was altogether a deplorable story. To think that we should have let a bear scramble on board like this, and should have lost three dogs at once! <sup>62</sup> Our dogs are dwindling down; we have only twenty-six now. That was a wily demon of a bear, <sup>63</sup> to be <sup>64</sup> such a little one. He had crawled on board by the gangway, shoved away a box that was standing in front of it, taken the dog that stood nearest, and gone off with it. When he had satisfied the first pangs of his hunger, he had come back and fetched No. 2; and if he had

been allowed, he would have continued the performance until the deck was cleared of dogs.

## NOTES

1. Masses of floating ice.
2. Engrossed in a game of cards.
3. The name of a card game.
4. Hundreds of people from all parts of the world had applied for the honour of being members of the expedition. Mogstad was one of these. In civil life he had been a head-keeper in a mental hospital.
5. The railing round the deck of the ship.
6. An unusually vicious fox. Students must not use coarse colloquial expressions of this kind.
7. A military officer who accepted the post of stoker in the expedition when no other post could be found for him.
8. Mad.
9. One of the dogs carried with a view to drawing sledges.
10. In colloquial English, the word "wretched" is applied to any person or thing that annoys us.
11. Flung about in all directions.
12. The sleeping cabins were under the deck.
13. He was in charge of the dynamo and electric installation.
14. Sailors are usually on duty for four hours at one time. Those who are on duty at the same time are known as "a watch". Nordahl therefore was on duty at the time.
15. A sailor's bed.
16. The name of a bitch, about to have pups.
17. Every ship must carry charts or sea-maps, showing the coast-line, islands, currents, &c. The room where these are kept is called the chart-room.
18. A large room used both as a dining-room and drawing-room (i.e. room for social intercourse).
19. Peter Henriksen, a harpooner.
20. A sail hung out of the window of a ship's cabin in such a way as to catch the wind and draw it into the cabin.
21. Excited noise.
22. On shipboard the word "forward" refers to the front part of the ship.
23. On the right side of the ship (to one facing towards the front part of the ship).
24. A passage-way along each side of the ship at a certain part of the deck.

25. Been so deeply grieved.
26. Making the same noise.
27. Mate of the *Fram*, that is, the chief officer next to the captain.
28. The sailor's word for a ladder or staircase leading from the deck to the lower part of the ship.
29. Speaking not pure Norwegian, but the dialect of his own part of Norway. Nansen thought this an indication that he was excited.
30. See 27.
31. Anything that stops a hole is called a "plug". They had put plugs made of tow (i.e. coarse, broken hemp; pronounce like "toe") in the muzzles of their rifles to keep them clean and dry.
32. Colloquial for "I raised".
33. Colloquial for "I inserted".
34. A matter requiring haste.
35. A slang expression of disgust.
36. An onomatopoeic word describing the sound made by the pulling of the trigger.
37. The part of the rifle in which the explosion takes place.
38. Spear used in hunting the walrus or horse whale, an animal that inhabits the Arctic seas.
39. Transfix. In India we speak of "pig-sticking".
40. Although we were near enough to the bear to be able to strike it with the barrels (or tubes) of our guns.
41. The kennel or house of the dog "Kvik" was just behind the door.
42. Touching the ground with hands and feet.
43. Masses of ice closely "packed" together.
44. Little hills of ice.
45. Frozen till it had become stiff (the proleptic use of the adjective).
46. On a previous occasion one of the dogs was torn in pieces by the other dogs. The dog "Suggen" watched the corpse to prevent the other dogs touching it. Hence it was called the "corpse-watcher".
47. "Alias" (pronounce "ale-yas") is the Latin for "elsewhere". "Smith alias Jones" means a rascal who in one place calls himself Smith, in another place Jones. Then the word comes to mean simply "otherwise known as".
48. This dog had a special dislike to Johansen; hence it was ironically called "Johansen's Friend".
49. A platform at the head of the lower mast of a ship.
50. One cannot see far from the deck of a ship; so the "look-out" man whose business it is to scan the sea especially for approaching dangers, sits far up in the rigging on a platform called the "crow's-nest".

51. Were not reconciled.
52. See 24.
53. Notice the mistake in grammar made by this not very well educated sailor.
54. Accent on the first syllable. Shoes of soft leather such as American Indians wear.
55. Owing to my slippery wooden shoes I fell flat, &c.
56. Idiom. "My last moment had come."
57. The lantern.
58. Idiom. "Beginning to run as fast as I could."
59. It is ungrammatical to use the historic present and the past tense in two parallel clauses.
60. The room where the arms were kept.
61. Idiom. "Even while he was watching me."
62. At the beginning they had 30 dogs, from East Siberia.
63. Bear as wicked as a demon.
64. Considering that he was.

### QUESTIONS

1. Would you like to take part in an expedition to the North Pole? Fully explain your reasons for your answer.
2. Give some account of the difficulties that have to be met in a Polar expedition, and the way in which they are overcome.
3. What advantages have explorers of to-day compared with those of Nansen's time?
4. Nansen wrote the story in diary form while the expedition was going on. Is this better than waiting till he came home to tell the story?

## H. G. Wells

Mr. H. G. Wells, the author of the following story "The Treasure in the Forest", taken from *The Short Stories of H. G. Wells*, was born in 1866, in comparatively humble circumstances. He studied both science and sociology; and, when he began to write, adopted the novel as the form in which he could best convey his thoughts of the present and the future condition of mankind. He has written a very large number both of short stories and of longer novels, and has been one of the most influential authors of our age. Part of his success lies in the fact that he deals with the problems which face the people of our own time. "The Treasure in the Forest", however, one of his short stories, deals with the passions that influence men in all ages and in all times.

### THE TREASURE IN THE FOREST

<sup>1</sup> The canoe <sup>2</sup> was now approaching the land. The bay opened out, and a gap in the white surf of the reef marked where the little river ran out to the sea; the thicker and deeper green of the virgin forest showed its course down the distant hill slope. The forest here came close to the beach. Far beyond, dim and almost cloudlike in texture, rose the mountains, like suddenly frozen waves. The sea was still, save for an almost imperceptible swell.<sup>3</sup> The sky blazed.

The man with the carved paddle stopped. "It should be somewhere here," he said. He shipped <sup>4</sup> the paddle and held his arms out straight before him.

The other man had been in the forepart of the canoe, closely scrutinizing the land. He had a sheet of yellow paper on his knee.

"Come, and look at this, Evans," he said.



Both men spoke in low tones, and their lips were hard and dry.

The man called Evans came swaying<sup>5</sup> along the canoe until he could look over his companion's shoulder.

The paper had the appearance of a rough map. By much folding it was creased and worn to the pitch of separation,<sup>6</sup> and the second man held the discoloured fragments together where they had parted. On it one could dimly make out, in almost obliterated pencil, the outline of the bay.

"Here," said Evans, "is the reef and here is the gap." He ran his thumb-nail over the chart.

"This curved and twisting line is the river—I could do with<sup>7</sup> a drink now!—and this star is the place."

"You see this dotted line," said the man with the map; "it is a straight line, and runs from the opening of the reef to a clump of palm-trees. The star comes just where it cuts the river. We must mark the place as we go into the lagoon."

"It's queer," said Evans after a pause, "what those little marks down here are for. It looks like the plan of a house or something; but what all those little dashes, pointing this way and that, may mean I can't get a notion. And what's the writing?"

"Chinese," said the man with the map.

"Of course! *He* was a Chinese,"<sup>8</sup> said Evans.

"They all were," said the man with the map.

They both sat for some minutes, staring at the land, while the canoe drifted slowly. Then Evans looked towards the paddle.

"Your turn with the paddle now, Hooker," said he.

And his companion quietly folded up his map, put it in his pocket, passed Evans carefully, and began to paddle. His movements were languid, like those of a man whose strength was nearly exhausted.

Evans sat with his eyes half-closed, watching the frothy breakwater<sup>9</sup> of the coral<sup>10</sup> creep nearer and nearer. The sky was like a furnace now, for the sun was near the zenith.

Though they were so near the Treasure he did not feel the exaltation he had anticipated. The intense excitement of the struggle for the plan,<sup>11</sup> and the long night voyage from the mainland in the unprovisioned canoe had, to use his own expression, "taken it out of him".<sup>12</sup> He tried to arouse himself by directing his mind to the ingots the Chinamen had spoken of, but it would not rest there; it came back headlong to the thought of sweet water rippling in the river, and to the almost unendurable dryness of his lips and throat. The rhythmic wash<sup>13</sup> of the sea upon the reef was becoming audible now, and it had a pleasant sound in his ears; the water washed along the side of the canoe, and the paddle dripped between each stroke. Presently he began to doze.

He was still dimly conscious of the island, but a queer dream texture interwove<sup>14</sup> with his sensations. Once again it was the night when he and Hooker had hit upon the Chinamen's secret; he saw the moonlit trees, the little fire burning, and the black figures of the three Chinamen—silvered on one side by moonlight, and on the other glowing from the firelight—and heard them talking together in pigeon-English<sup>15</sup>—for they came from different provinces.<sup>16</sup> Hooker had caught the drift<sup>17</sup> of their talk first, and had motioned to him to listen. Fragments of the conversation were inaudible and fragments incomprehensible. A Spanish galleon<sup>18</sup> from the Philippines hopelessly aground, and its treasure buried against the day of return,<sup>19</sup> lay in the background of the story; a shipwrecked crew thinned by disease, a quarrel or so,<sup>20</sup> and the needs of discipline, and at last taking to their boats never to be heard of again. Then Chang-hi, only a year since, wandering ashore, had happened upon the ingots hidden for two hundred years, had deserted his junk,<sup>21</sup> and reburied them with infinite toil, single-handed but very safe. He laid great stress on the safety—it was a secret of his. Now he wanted help to return and exhume them. Presently the little map fluttered and the voices sank. A fine story for two stranded British wastrels<sup>22</sup> to hear.

Evans' dream shifted to the moment when he had Chang-hi's pigtail in his hand. The life of a Chinaman is scarcely sacred like a European's.<sup>23</sup> The cunning little face of Chang-hi, first keen and furious like a startled snake, and then fearful, treacherous and pitiful, became overwhelmingly prominent in the dream. At the end Chang-hi had grinned, a most incomprehensible and startling grin. Abruptly things became very unpleasant, as they will do at times in dreams. Chang-hi gibbered and threatened him. He saw in his dreams heaps and heaps of gold, and Chang-hi intervening and struggling to hold him back from it. He took Chang-hi by the pigtail—how big the yellow brute was, and how he struggled and grinned! He kept growing bigger too. Then the bright heaps of gold turned to a roaring furnace, and a vast devil, surprisingly like Chang-hi, but with a huge black tail, began to feed him with coals. They burnt his mouth horribly. Another devil was shouting his name: "Evans, Evans, you sleepy fool!"—or was it Hooker?

He woke up. They were in the mouth of the lagoon.

"There are the three palm-trees. It must be in a line with that clump of bushes," said his companion. "Mark that. If we go to those bushes and then strike into <sup>24</sup> the bush in a straight line from here, we shall come to it when we come to the stream."

They could see now where the mouth of the stream opened out. At the sight of it Evans revived. "Hurry up, man," he said, "or by heaven I shall have to drink sea water!"<sup>25</sup> He gnawed his hand and stared at the gleam of silver <sup>26</sup> among the rocks and green tangle.

Presently he turned almost fiercely upon Hooker. "Give me the paddle," he said.

So they reached the river mouth. A little way up Hooker took some water in the hollow of his hand, tasted it, and spat it out.<sup>27</sup> A little further he tried again. "This will do," he said, and they began drinking eagerly.

"Curse this!" said Evans suddenly. "It's <sup>28</sup> too slow."

And, leaning dangerously <sup>29</sup> over the forepart of the canoe, he began to suck up the water with his lips.

Presently they made an end of drinking, and, running the canoe into a little creek, were about to land among the thick growth that overhung the water.

"We shall have to scramble <sup>30</sup> through this to the beach to find our bushes and get the line <sup>31</sup> to the place," said Evans.

"We had better paddle round," said Hooker.

So they pushed out again into the river and paddled back down it to the sea, and along the shore to the place where the clump of bushes grew. Here they landed, pulled the light canoe far up the beach, and then went up towards the edge of the jungle until they could see the opening of the reef and the bushes in a straight line. Evans had taken a native implement out of the canoe. It was L-shaped, and the transverse piece was armed with a polished stone. Hooker carried the paddle. "It is straight now in this direction," said he; "we must push through this till we strike <sup>32</sup> the stream. Then we must prospect." <sup>33</sup>

They pushed through a close tangle of reeds, broad fronds, and young trees, and at first it was toilsome going, but very speedily the trees became larger and the ground beneath them opened out. The blaze of the sunlight was replaced by insensible degrees by cool shadow. The trees became at last vast pillars that rose up to a canopy of greenery overhead. Dim white flowers hung from their stems, and ropy <sup>34</sup> creepers swung from tree to tree. The shadow deepened. On the ground, blotched <sup>35</sup> fungi and a red-brown incrustation <sup>36</sup> became frequent.

Evans shivered. "It seems almost cold here after the blaze outside."

"I hope we are keeping to the straight," <sup>37</sup> said Hooker.

Presently they saw, far ahead, a gap in the sombre darkness where white shafts of hot sunlight smote into the forest. There also was brilliant green under-growth, and coloured flowers. Then they heard the rush of water.

"Here is the river. We should be close to it now," said Hooker.

The vegetation was thick by the river bank. Great plants, as yet unnamed, grew among the roots of the big trees, and spread rosettes of large green fans towards the strip of sky. Many flowers and a creeper with shiny foliage clung to the exposed stems. On the water of the broad, quiet pool which the treasure-seekers now overlooked<sup>38</sup> there floated big oval leaves and a waxen, pinkish-white flower not unlike a water-lily. Further, as the river bent away from them, the water suddenly frothed and became noisy in a rapid.<sup>39</sup>

"Well?" said Evans.

"We have swerved a little from the straight," said Hooker. "That was to be expected."

He turned and looked into the dim cool shadows of the silent forest behind them. "If we beat<sup>40</sup> a little way up and down the stream we should soon come to something."

"You said——" began Evans.

"*He* said there was a heap of stones," said Hooker.

The two men looked at each other for a moment.

"Let us try a little down-stream first," said Evans.

They advanced slowly, looking curiously about them. Suddenly Evans stopped. "What the devil's that?"<sup>41</sup> said he.

Hooker followed his finger. "Something blue," he said. It had come into view as they topped<sup>42</sup> a gentle swell of the ground. Then he began to distinguish what it was.

He advanced suddenly with hasty steps, until the body that belonged to the limp hand and arm had become visible. His grip tightened on the implement he carried. The thing was the figure of a Chinaman lying on his face. The abandon<sup>43</sup> of the pose<sup>44</sup> was unmistakable.

The two men drew closer together, and stood staring silently at the ominous dead body. It lay in a clear space among the trees. Near by was a spade after the Chinese pattern, and further off lay a scattered heap of stones, close to a freshly dug hole.



"Somebody has been here before," said Hooker, clearing his throat.

Then suddenly Evans began to swear and rave, and stamp upon the ground.

Hooker turned white but said nothing. He advanced towards the prostrate body. He saw the neck was puffed and purple, and the hands and ankles swollen. "Pah!" he said, and turned suddenly away and went towards the excavation. He gave a cry of surprise. He shouted to Evans, who was following him slowly.

"You fool! It's all right. It's here still." Then he turned again and looked at the dead Chinaman, and then again at the hole.

Evans hurried to the hole. Already half-exposed by the ill-fated wretch beside them, lay a number of dull yellow bars. He bent down in the hole, and, clearing off the soil with his bare hands, hastily pulled one of the masses out. As he did so a little thorn pricked his hand. He pulled the delicate spike out with his fingers and lifted the ingot.

"Only gold or lead could weigh like this," he said exultantly.

Hooker was still looking at the dead Chinaman. He was puzzled.

"He stole a march on <sup>45</sup> his friends," he said at last. "He came here alone, and some poisonous snake has killed him. . . . I wonder how he found the place."

Evans stood with the ingot in his hands. What did a dead Chinaman signify? "We shall have to take this stuff to the mainland piecemeal,<sup>46</sup> and bury it there for a while. How shall we get it to the canoe?"

He took his jacket off and spread it on the ground, and flung two or three ingots into it. Presently he found that another little thorn had punctured his skin.

"This is as much as we can carry," said he. Then suddenly, with a queer rush of irritation, "What are you staring at?"

Hooker turned to him. "I can't stand . . . him." He nodded towards the corpse. "It's so like——"<sup>47</sup>

"Rubbish!" said Evans. "All Chinamen are alike."

Hooker looked into his face. "I'm going to bury *that*, anyhow, before I lend a hand with <sup>48</sup> this stuff."

"Don't be a fool, Hooker," said Evans. "Let that mass of corruption <sup>49</sup> bide."<sup>50</sup>

Hooker hesitated, and then his eye went carefully over the brown soil about them. "It scares me somehow," he said.

"The thing is," said Evans, "what to do with these ingots. Shall we re-bury them over here, or take them across the strait in the canoe?"

Hooker thought. His puzzled gaze wandered among the tall tree-trunks, and up into the remote sunlit greenery overhead. He shivered again as his eye rested upon the blue figure of the Chinaman. He stared searchingly among the grey depths between the trees.

"What's come to you, Hooker?" said Evans. "Have you lost your wits?"

"Let's get the gold out of this place, anyhow," said Hooker.

He took the ends of the collar of the coat in his hands, and Evans took the opposite corners, and they lifted the mass. "Which way?" said Evans. "To the canoe?"

"It's queer," said Evans, when they had advanced only a few steps, "but my arms ache still with that paddling. . . ."

"Curse it!" he said. "But <sup>61</sup> they ache! I must rest."

They let the coat down. Evans' face was white, and little drops of sweat stood out upon his forehead. "It's stuffy,<sup>52</sup> somehow, in this forest."

Then with an abrupt transition to unreasonable anger: "What is the good of waiting here all the day? Lend a hand, I say! You have done nothing but moon <sup>53</sup> since we saw the dead Chinaman."

Hooker was looking steadfastly at his companion's face. He helped raising the coat bearing the ingots, and they went forward perhaps a hundred yards in silence. Evans began to breathe heavily. "Can't you speak?" he said.

"What's the matter with you?" said Hooker.

Evans stumbled, and then with a sudden curse flung the coat from him. He stood for a moment staring at Hooker, and then with a groan clutched at his own throat.

"Don't come near me," he said, and went and leant against a tree. Then in a steadier voice, "I'll be better in a minute."

Presently his grip upon the trunk loosened, and he slipped slowly down the stem of the tree until he was a crumpled heap at its foot. His hands were clenched convulsively. His face became distorted with pain. Hooker approached him.

"Don't touch me! Don't touch me!" said Evans in a stifled voice. "Put the gold back on the coat."

"Can't I do anything for you?" said Hooker.

"Put the gold back on the coat."

As Hooker handled the ingots he felt a little prick on the ball of his thumb. He looked at his hand and saw a slender thorn, perhaps two inches in length.

Evans gave an inarticulate cry and rolled over.

Hooker's jaw dropped.<sup>54</sup> He stared at the thorn for a moment with dilated eyes. Then he looked at Evans, who was now crumpled together on the ground, his back bending and straightening spasmodically.<sup>55</sup> Then he looked through the pillars of the trees and network of creeper stems, to where in the dim grey shadow the blue-clad body of the Chinaman was still indistinctly visible. He thought of the little dashes in the corner of the plan, and in a moment he understood.

"God help me!" he said. For the thorns were similar to those the Dyaks poison and use in their blowing-tubes. He understood now what Chang-hi's assurance of the safety of his treasure meant. He understood that grin now.

"Evans!" he cried.

But Evans was silent and motionless now, save for a horrible spasmodic twitching of his limbs. A profound silence brooded over the forest.

Then Hooker began to suck furiously at the little pink spot on the ball of his thumb—sucking for dear life.<sup>56</sup> Presently he felt a strange aching pain in his arms and

shoulders, and his fingers seemed difficult to bend. Then he knew that sucking was no good.

Abruptly he stopped, and sitting down by the pile of ingots, and resting his chin upon his hands and his elbows upon his knees, stared at the distorted but still stirring body of his companion. Chang-hi's grin came into his mind again. The dull pain spread towards his throat and grew slowly in intensity. Far above him a faint breeze stirred the greenery, and the white petals of some unknown flower came floating down through the gloom.

## NOTES

1. The author introduces the story abruptly. You only gradually find out whom he is speaking about and what they were doing.
2. A light boat, used by American Indians, propelled by peculiar large-bladed oars, called paddles.
3. Smooth waves which do not break into foam.
4. Lifted it out of the water and brought it into the canoe.
5. Canoes are light and easily upset. A man moving along the bottom of the canoe makes it sway from side to side.
6. Until the paper had torn along the line of the folds.
7. Would be glad to have.
8. Being uneducated, he thinks "Chinese" is a plural word, and makes the singular "Chinee" instead of "Chinaman".
9. Any barrier, natural or artificial, that breaks the force of the waves and leaves the water nearer the shore calm.
10. Here the breakwater was a reef or line of coral, i.e. rock formed by little sea-animals.
11. Sketch of the ground.
12. Left him very weak.
13. Rise and fall.
14. His half-conscious sensations of the present joined with his dreamy recollections of a past scene to form a whole, like the lengthwise and cross threads in weaving cloth.
15. Sometimes spelt "pidgin" (a corruption of the word "business"). It is a sort of baby-English in which Chinese traders talk to Europeans.
16. This explains why they did not talk Chinese to each other.
17. The trend or main idea.
18. A large Spanish ship of the olden times (used in the American trade).

19. So that they could get it when they returned.
20. One or two quarrels.
21. Chinese flat-bottomed sailing-vessel.
22. Men who have "wasted" their lives.
23. This is the opinion of these sailors, not of the author.
24. Go direct into.
25. Which, being salt, would only increase his thirst.
26. Shining water of the river.
27. Because it was still sea-water, and therefore salt.
28. "It" means the method of lifting the water in his hands.
29. Because he might upset the canoe.
30. Make one's way with difficulty.
31. Direction.
32. Come upon.
33. Examine the neighbourhood (a word used by miners looking for the best place to dig a mine).
34. Rope-like.
35. Discoloured.
36. Coating.
37. Direct line.
38. Looked down upon, from above.
39. Swift current produced by a sharp descent in the river-bed.
40. Move about.
41. Coarsely emphatic for "What is that?" Not to be used by students.
42. Came to the top of.
43. Complete absence of effort.
44. Attitude.
45. Military idiom. "Arrived before them and so deprived them of the prize."
46. Piece by piece.
47. How would you complete the sentence?
48. Help to remove.
49. Contemptuous phrase for a corpse.
50. "Let bide" means "let alone". ("Bide" is short for "abide".)
51. In colloquial English "but" is often equal to "how".
52. Airless.
53. Loiter aimlessly.
54. With surprise and fear.
55. Alternately bending and straightening in convulsive movements.
56. Idiom. "Earnestly, as the only hope of saving his life."



## QUESTIONS

1. A number of the phrases you will not understand the first time you read the story, because the explanation only comes later. What do you think of this way of telling the story?

2. Give an outline of the story as it would be told in the ordinary way, putting at the beginning the things that happened first, and so on.

3. How does this story compare with other stories of treasure-hunting that you have read?

4. What points in the telling of the story make it so effective? (Notice, for example, how the secret of the meaning of the dashes is kept till near the end.)

5. Would the story have been more or less effective if it had been told of only one man?

6. If you were an artist, and were asked to draw six pictures illustrating this story, what six scenes would you choose?

## Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) was the most popular English novelist and humorist of last century. He excelled in describing the life and the sorrows of the poor. In his later books humour plays a much smaller part than in the earlier. *A Tale of Two Cities* (the two cities being Paris and London), which centres round the French Revolution, is one of his later and most powerful novels.

Charles Evrémonde was the nephew and heir of a French Marquis who treated his tenants very cruelly. Unwilling to be a partner in his uncle's cruelty, but unable to help the tenants, he left France and became a teacher of French in London. There he changed his name to Darnay and married Lucie, daughter of a French Doctor, Manette, who, through a wicked scheme of Darnay's uncle, the Marquis, had suffered solitary confinement in a French prison for very many years.

When the Marquis was killed by the father of a child whom he had brutally run over in his carriage, Darnay sent orders to Gabelle, the steward of the estate, that the tenants were to be most liberally treated. After the Revolution broke out, Gabelle was thrown into prison as being one who had helped the "aristocrats" (as the land-holders and wealthy people were called). He was going to be condemned to death by the Revolutionaries, but he sent a letter to Darnay in England, asking him to come to give evidence to show that by Darnay's orders he had been treating the tenants with great generosity.

Darnay knew that, as a relative of the late Marquis, and a member of an aristocratic family, he would be in great danger if he went to France during the Revolution; yet he bravely went, leaving his wife and little daughter behind. Almost as soon as he landed in France he was arrested under a law which made it a criminal offence for an aristocrat to leave the country (though, as a matter of fact, he had left the country, simply to earn his living, many years before). In the meantime his wife heard of his danger and came to France with her father, Dr. Manette, and her little girl. Darnay would

probably have been condemned to death; but when it became known that he was the son-in-law of Dr. Manette who had suffered so terribly from the wicked Marquis, he was at once set free.

In the very midst of the rejoicings of the little family, he was again arrested as being an aristocrat, and this time he was condemned to death. Sydney Carton, a dissolute young English lawyer, had been in love with Lucie Manette before Charles Darnay married her. He also came to Paris during the French Revolution. He bore an extraordinary resemblance to Darnay; and gallantly made up his mind, for Lucie's sake, to take her husband's place beneath the guillotine. This brave plan his resemblance to Darnay enabled him to accomplish.

### A LIVING SACRIFICE

He<sup>1</sup> had been apprised<sup>2</sup> that the final hour<sup>3</sup> was Three, and he knew he would be summoned some time earlier, inasmuch as the tumbrils<sup>4</sup> jolted heavily and slowly through the streets. Therefore, he resolved to keep Two before his mind, as the hour, and so to strengthen himself in the interval that he might be able, after that time, to strengthen others.

Walking regularly to and fro with his arms folded on his breast, a very different man from the prisoner who had walked to and fro at La Force,<sup>5</sup> he heard One struck away from him without surprise. The hour had measured like most other hours. Devoutly thankful to Heaven for his recovered self-possession, he thought, "There is but another now," and turned to walk again.

Footsteps in the stone passage outside the door. He stopped.

The key was put in the lock and turned. Before the door was opened, or as it opened, a man<sup>6</sup> said in a low voice in English: "He has never seen me here; I have kept out of his way. Go you in alone; I wait near. Lose no time!"

The door was quickly opened and closed, and there stood before him face to face, quiet, intent upon him, with the light of a smile on his features, and a cautionary finger<sup>7</sup> on his lips, Sydney Carton.

There was something so bright and remarkable in his look, that, for the first moment, the prisoner misdoubted

him to be an apparition of his own imagining.<sup>8</sup> But, he spoke, and it was his voice; he took the prisoner's hand, and it was his real grasp.

"Of all the people upon earth, you least expected to see me?" he said.

"I could not believe it to be you. I can scarcely believe it now. You are not"—the apprehension suddenly came into his mind—"a prisoner?"

"No. I am accidentally possessed of a power over one of the keepers here,<sup>9</sup> and in virtue of it I stand before you. I come from her—your wife, dear Darnay."

The prisoner wrung his hand.

"I bring you a request from her."

"What is it?"

"A most earnest, pressing, and emphatic entreaty, addressed to you in the most pathetic tones of the voice so dear to you, that you well remember."

The prisoner turned his face partly aside.

"You have no time to ask me why I bring it, or what it means; I have no time to tell you. You must comply with it—take off those boots you wear, and draw on these of mine."

There was a chair against the wall of the cell, behind the prisoner. Carton, pressing forward, had already, with the speed of lightning, got him down into it, and stood over him barefoot.

"Draw on these boots of mine. Put your hands to them; put your will to them. Quick!"

"Carton, there is no escaping from this place; it never can be done. You will only die with me. It is madness."

"It would be madness if I asked you to escape; but do I? When I ask you to pass out at that door, tell me it is madness and remain here. Change that cravat<sup>10</sup> for this of mine, that coat for this of mine. While you do it, let me take this ribbon from your hair,<sup>11</sup> and shake out your hair like this of mine!"

With wonderful quickness, and with a strength of both will and action that appeared quite supernatural, he forced

all these changes upon him. The prisoner was like a young child in his hands.

"Carton! Dear Carton! It is madness. It cannot be accomplished, it never can be done, it has been attempted, and has always failed. I implore you not to add your death to the bitterness of mine."

"Do I ask you, my dear Darnay, to pass the door? When I ask that, refuse. There are pen and ink and paper on this table. Is your hand steady enough to write?"

"It was when you came in."

"Steady it again, and write what I shall dictate. Quick, friend, quick!"

Pressing his hand to his bewildered head, Darnay sat down at the table. Carton, with his right hand in his breast,<sup>12</sup> stood close beside him.

"Write exactly as I speak."

"To whom do I address it?"

"To no one." Carton still had his hand in his breast.

"Do I date it?"

"No."

The prisoner looked up at each question. Carton, standing over him with his hand in his breast, looked down.<sup>13</sup>

"If you remember," said Carton dictating, "'the words that passed between us long ago,<sup>14</sup> you will readily comprehend this when you see it. You do remember them, I know. It is not in your nature to forget them.'"

He was drawing his hand from his breast; the prisoner chancing to look up in his hurried wonder as he wrote, the hand stopped, closing upon something.

"Have you written 'forget them'," Carton asked.

"I have. Is that a weapon in your hand?"

"No; I am not armed."

"What is it in your hand?"

"You shall know directly. Write on; there are but a few words more." He dictated again. "'I am thankful that the time has come, when I can prove them. That I do so is



no subject for regret or grief.'” As he said these words with his eyes fixed on the writer, his hand slowly and softly moved down close to the writer’s face.

The pen dropped from Darnay’s fingers on the table, and he looked about him vacantly.

“What vapour is that?” he asked.

“Vapour?”

“Something that crossed me?”

“I am conscious of nothing; there can be nothing here. Take up the pen and finish. Hurry, hurry!”

As if his memory were impaired, or his faculties disordered, the prisoner made an effort to rally his attention. As he looked at Carton with clouded eyes and with an altered manner of breathing, Carton—his hand again in his breast—looked steadily at him.

“Hurry, hurry!”

The prisoner bent over the paper once more.

“‘If it had been otherwise;’”—Carton’s hand was again watchfully and softly stealing down;—“‘I never should have used the longer opportunity.<sup>15</sup> If it had been otherwise;’”—the hand was at the prisoner’s face;—“‘I should but have had so much the more to answer for. If it had been otherwise——’” Carton looked at the pen and saw it was trailing off into unintelligible signs.

Carton’s hand moved back to his breast no more. The prisoner sprang up with a reproachful look, but Carton’s hand was close and firm at his nostrils, and Carton’s left arm caught him round the waist. For a few seconds he faintly struggled with the man who had come to lay down his life for him; but, within a minute or so, he was stretched insensible on the ground.

Quickly, but with hands as true to the purpose as his heart was, Carton dressed himself in the clothes the prisoner had laid aside, combed back his hair, and tied it with the ribbon the prisoner had worn. Then, he softly called, “Enter there! Come in!” and the Spy presented himself.

"You see?" said Carton, looking up, as he kneeled on one knee beside the insensible figure, putting the paper in the breast: "is your hazard very great?"<sup>16</sup>

"Mr. Carton," the Spy answered, with a timid snap of his fingers, "my hazard is not *that*,<sup>17</sup> in the thick of business here,<sup>18</sup> if you are true to the whole of your bargain."

"Don't fear me. I will be true to the death."

"You must be, Mr. Carton, if the tale of fifty-two<sup>19</sup> is to be right. Being made right by you in that dress, I shall have no fear."

"Have no fear! I shall soon be out of the way of harming you, and the rest<sup>20</sup> will soon be far from here, please God! Now, get assistance, and take me to the coach."

"You,"<sup>21</sup> said the Spy nervously.

"Him, man, with whom I have exchanged. You get out at the gate by which you brought me in?"

"Of course."

"I was weak and faint when you brought me in, and I am fainter now you take me out. The parting interview has overpowered me.<sup>22</sup> Such a thing has happened here, often, and too often. Your life is in your own hands. Quick! Call assistance!"

"You swear not to betray me?" said the trembling Spy, as he paused for a last moment.

"Man, man!" returned Carton, stamping his foot; "have I sworn by no solemn vow already, to go through with this, that<sup>23</sup> you waste the precious moments now? Take him yourself to the courtyard you know of, place him yourself in the carriage, show him yourself to Mr. Lorry,<sup>24</sup> tell him yourself to give him no restorative but air, and to remember my words of last night, and his promise of last night,<sup>25</sup> and drive away!"

The Spy withdrew, and Carton seated himself at the table, resting his forehead on his hands. The Spy returned immediately with two men.

"How, then?" said one of them, contemplating the fallen

figure. "So afflicted to find that his friend has drawn a prize in the lottery of Sainte Guillotine?"<sup>26</sup>

"A good patriot," said the other, "could hardly have been more afflicted if the aristocrat had drawn a blank."

They raised the unconscious figure, placed it on a litter<sup>27</sup> they had brought to the door, and bent to carry it away.

"The time is short, Evrémonde," said the Spy, in a warning voice.

"I know it well," answered Carton. "Be careful of my friend, I entreat you, and leave me."

"Come then, my children," said Barsad. "Lift him, and come away!"

The door closed, and Carton was left alone. Straining his powers of listening to the utmost, he listened for any sound that might denote suspicion or alarm. There was none. Keys turned, doors clashed, footsteps passed along distant passages: no cry was raised, or hurry made, that seemed unusual. Breathing more freely in a little while, he sat down at the table, and listened again until the clock struck Two.

Sounds that he was not afraid of, for he divined<sup>28</sup> their meaning, then began to be audible. Several doors were opened in succession, and finally his own. A gaoler, with a list in his hand, looked in, merely saying, "Follow me, Evrémonde!" and he followed into a large dark room, at a distance. It was a dark winter day, and what with<sup>29</sup> the shadows within, and what with<sup>29</sup> the shadows without, he could but dimly discern the others who were brought there to have their arms bound. Some were standing; some were seated. Some were lamenting, and in restless motion; but those were few. The great majority were silent and still, looking fixedly at the ground.

As he stood by the wall in a dim corner, while some of the fifty-two were brought in after him, one man stopped in passing to embrace him, as having a knowledge of him. It thrilled him with a great dread of discovery; but the man

went on. A very few moments after that, a young woman with a slight girlish form, a sweet spare<sup>30</sup> face in which there was no vestige of colour, and large widely opened patient eyes, rose from the seat where he had observed her sitting, and came to speak to him.

"Citizen Evrémonde," she said, touching him with her cold hand. "I am a poor little seamstress,<sup>31</sup> who was with you in La Force."

He murmured for answer: "True. I forget what you were accused of?"

"Plots. Though the just Heaven knows I am innocent of any. Is it likely? Who would think of plotting with a poor little weak creature like me?"

The forlorn smile with which she said it, so touched him that tears started from his eyes.

"I am not afraid to die, Citizen Evrémonde, but I have done nothing. I am not unwilling to die, if the Republic which is to do so much good to us poor, will profit by my death; but I do not know how that can be, Citizen Evrémonde. Such a poor little weak creature!"

As the last thing on earth that his heart was to warm and soften to, it warmed and softened to this pitiable girl.

"I heard you were released, Citizen Evrémonde. I hoped it was true?"

"It was. But, I was again taken and condemned."

"If I may ride<sup>32</sup> with you, Citizen Evrémonde, will you let me hold your hand? I am not afraid, but I am little and weak, and it will give me more courage."

As the patient eyes were lifted to his face, he saw a sudden doubt in them, and then astonishment. He pressed the work-worn, hunger-worn young fingers, and touched his lips.<sup>33</sup>

"Are you dying for him?" she whispered.

"And his wife and child. Hush! Yes."

"O you will let me hold your brave hand, stranger?"

"Hush! Yes, my poor sister; to the last."

The same shadows that are falling on the prison, are falling in that same hour of the early afternoon, on the Barrier with the crowd about it, when a coach going out of Paris drives up to be examined.

"Who goes here? Whom have we within? Papers!"<sup>34</sup>

The papers are handed out, and read.

"Alexandre Manette. Physician. French. Which is he?"

This is he; this helpless, inarticulately murmuring, wandering old man<sup>35</sup> pointed out.<sup>36</sup>

"Apparently the Citizen-Doctor is not in his right mind? The Revolution-fever will have been too much for him?"

Greatly too much for him.

"Hah! Many suffer with it. Lucie. His daughter. French. Which is she?"

This is she.

"Apparently it must be. Lucie, the wife of Evrémonde; is it not?"

It is.

"Hah! Evrémonde has an assignation<sup>37</sup> elsewhere. Lucie, her child. English. This is she?"

She and no other.

"Kiss me, child of Evrémonde. Now, thou hast kissed a good Republican; something new in thy family; remember it! Sydney Carton. Advocate. English. Which is he?"

He lies here, in this corner of the carriage. He, too, is pointed out.

"Apparently the English advocate is in a swoon?"

It is hoped he will recover in the fresher air. It is represented that he is not in strong health, and has separated sadly from a friend who is under the displeasure of the Republic.

"Is that all? It is not a great deal, that. Many are under the displeasure of the Republic, and must look out at the little window.<sup>38</sup> Jarvis Lorry. Banker. English. Which is he?"

"I am he. Necessarily, being the last."



It is Jarvis Lorry who has replied to all the previous questions.<sup>39</sup> It is Jarvis Lorry who has alighted and stands with his hand on the coach door, replying to a group of officials. They leisurely walk round the carriage and leisurely mount the box, to look at what little luggage it carries on the roof; the country-people hanging about, press nearer to the coach doors and greedily stare in; a little child, carried by its mother, has its short arm held out for it, that it may touch the wife of an aristocrat who has gone to the guillotine.

"Behold your papers, Jarvis Lorry, countersigned."<sup>40</sup>

"One can depart, citizen?"<sup>41</sup>

"One can depart. Forward, my postillions!"<sup>42</sup> A good journey!"

"I salute you, citizens.—And the first danger passed!"

These are again the words of Jarvis Lorry, as he clasps his hands, and looks upward. There is terror in the carriage, there is weeping, there is the heavy breathing of the insensible traveller.

"Are we not going too slowly? Can they not be induced to go faster?" asks Lucie, clinging to the old man.

"It would seem like flight, my darling. I must not urge them too much; it would rouse suspicion."

"Look back, look back, and see if we are pursued!"

"The road is clear, my dearest. So far, we are not pursued."

Houses in twos and threes pass by us,<sup>43</sup> solitary farms, ruinous buildings, dye-works, tanneries, and the like, open country, avenues of leafless trees. The hard, uneven pavement is under us, the soft deep mud is on either side. Sometimes we strike into the skirting<sup>44</sup> mud, to avoid the stones that clatter<sup>45</sup> us and shake us; sometimes we stick in ruts and sloughs there. The agony of our impatience is then so great, that in our wild alarm and hurry we are for getting out<sup>46</sup> and running—hiding—doing anything but stopping.

Out of the open country, in again among ruinous buildings, solitary farms, dye-works, tanneries, and the like, cottages in twos and threes, avenues of leafless trees. Have these

men <sup>47</sup> deceived us, and taken us back by another road? Is not this the same place twice over? Thank Heaven, no. A village. Look back, look back, and see if we are pursued! Hush! The posting-house.<sup>48</sup>

Leisurely our four horses are taken out; leisurely the coach stands in the little street, bereft of horses, and with no likelihood upon it of ever moving again;<sup>49</sup> leisurely, the new horses come into visible existence, one by one; leisurely the new postillions follow, sucking and plaiting the lashes of their whips; leisurely the old postillions count their money, make wrong additions, and arrive at dissatisfied results. All the time, our overfraught hearts are beating at a rate that would far outstrip the fastest gallop of the fastest horses ever foaled.

At length the new postillions are in their saddles, and the old are left behind. We are through the village, up the hill and down the hill, and on the low watery grounds. Suddenly the postillions exchange speech with animated gesticulation, and the horses are pulled up, almost on their haunches. We are pursued?

"Ho! Within the carriage there. Speak then!"

"What is it?" asks Mr. Lorry, looking out at window.

"How many did they say?"

"I do not understand you."

"—At the last post. How many to the guillotine to-day?"

"Fifty-two."

"I said so! A brave number! My fellow-citizen here would have it forty-two; ten more heads are worth having. The guillotine goes handsomely. I love it. Hi <sup>50</sup> forward. Whoop!"

The night comes on dark. He <sup>51</sup> moves more; he is beginning to revive, and to speak intelligibly; he thinks they are still together; he asks him,<sup>52</sup> by his name, what he has in his hand. O pity us, kind Heaven, and help us! Look, look out, and see if we are pursued.

The wind is rushing after us, and the clouds are flying after us, and the moon is plunging after us, and the whole

wild night is in pursuit of us; but, so far we are pursued by nothing else.

## NOTES

1. Charles Evrémonde.
2. Informed.
3. The hour fixed for his execution.
4. The carts in which the condemned were taken from the prison to the guillotine.
5. The name of the prison in which he had first been confined. Then he was in despair and afraid of insanity. Now his mind is calm.
6. This man was an Englishman who called himself John Barsad (his real name was Solomon Pross). He had acted as spy and secret informer to the French Monarchy, and then to the French Republic, and was now a turnkey in the prison.
7. Placing his finger (on his lips) as a warning to the prisoner to be silent.
8. A ghost formed out of his own imagination.
9. Carton knew that Barsad had formerly been a spy in the pay of the English Government which was hostile to the French Revolution. He insisted that Barsad must help him in his plot to take Evrémonde's place; otherwise he would denounce him to the Revolutionary Government.
10. A kind of large handkerchief tied round the neck.
11. According to a custom of the time Evrémonde wore his hair gathered together and fastened with a ribbon.
12. Read on, and then ask yourself why Carton put his hand in his breast.
13. Read on, and you will see why Carton wanted the prisoner to look up at him.
14. In solemn conversation with Miss Manette before she married Evrémonde (or Darnay as he called himself in England), Carton had told her he would gladly die to save the life of one she loved.
15. Though Darnay does not know it, the letter he is writing at Carton's dictation is meant for his own wife. Carton means that if he went on living, he would never become a reformed character, or make any sacrifice for Lucie. But, by dying now in her husband's place, he can make her happy.
16. Barsad, the spy, had been terribly afraid that the authorities would find out that he had helped one of their prisoners to escape.
17. "That" means "a snap of the fingers"; i.e. "my danger is nothing at all".

18. When the authorities are so busy with so many prisoners.
19. "Tale" in the Old English sense of "number". Fifty-two prisoners were to be executed that day.
20. I.e. Evrémonde, his wife and child.
21. When Carton said "Take me", he meant "Take Evrémonde, who is now to represent me".
22. He means that this is the story Barsad is to tell.
23. An idiom. "No solemn vow which makes it absurd that you waste, &c."
24. An old English bank clerk, a great friend of the Manettes, at that time in Paris.
25. Mr. Lorry did not fully understand what Carton was going to do; but he knew he was going to see the prisoner and promised not to tell Lucie.
26. One of the coarse jokes of the time. In a lottery people purchase tickets and the prize is given to whoever holds the lucky number. Here the guillotine is represented as a saint, conducting a lottery. To win the prize is to be condemned to death.
27. A rough, portable bed.
28. Guessed.
29. The double "what with" means "as the combined result of".
30. Thin.
31. Sewing woman. (Pronounce "semstress".)
32. Go in the same tumbril. (The word "ride" is used in English of travelling in a vehicle.)
33. As a sign that she was to keep silent. If she uttered an exclamation, it might betray him.
34. (Show your) papers (i.e. passports).
35. Old Dr. Manette had become insane through his long imprisonment. On his release he had regained his health. Owing to recent events, his mind had begun to "wander" again, and he was muttering unintelligible sounds.
36. Dickens here adopts the style of a report, with many of the verbs omitted. "(is) pointed out."
37. Engagement (another coarse joke).
38. Another of the terrible Revolution jokes. "Must put his head through the window (or opening) in the guillotine, below the blade."
39. His answers have all been given in reported speech, and therefore with no quotation marks.
40. Signed by the Revolution officer in addition to (the original signature).
41. By a law of the Revolution Government, all people had to address each other as "citizen" or "citizeness".
42. Men who rode on the horses that drew the carriage.

43. Dickens represents the travellers as describing the journey in the first person.
44. That "skirts" or "borders on" the side of the road.
45. Disturb us by their unpleasant noise.
46. Propose to get out.
47. The postillions.
48. (We have reached) the inn where we change horses.
49. So it seems, at least, to the impatient travellers.
50. An exclamation addressed to the horses.
51. Evrémonde.
52. Carton, whom, in imagination, he sees before him.

### QUESTIONS

1. Explain the plan made by Sydney Carton to save Evrémonde and show how it was carried out.
2. What ideas of the French Revolution do you get from this story?
3. What would be the feelings of Evrémonde when he returned to England with his wife and child, and regained his health?
4. Can you tell any story of a similar self-sacrifice?
5. Give in outline any other story, the plot of which depends on an extraordinary likeness between two people.



## Charles Dickens

The following passage is taken from *The Old Curiosity Shop*, one of Dickens's earliest novels. His great popularity with the general body of the people rested as much on his pathos as on his humour. Students of literature think that Dickens was too fond of trying to make his readers weep; but for the average reader this was an added attraction.

"Little Nell's" grandfather was passionately fond of the little orphan grandchild who had been left to his care. Being very poor, and anxious to make a fortune for Nell, he borrowed money with which he gambled. He always lost, and the house in which they lived became the property of his creditor. Much of the novel is taken up with the story of the wanderings of grandfather and grandchild when they were driven from their home. The visit to the village in which was the little schoolhouse was one of the episodes of their travels.

"Little Nell" is one of the famous "Dickens's children", others being Paul Dombey, *Oliver Twist*, and *David Copperfield*. Dickens was perhaps the first writer to put the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of a little child in the very forefront of a long novel.

### THE VILLAGE SCHOOL

After a sound night's rest in a chamber in the thatched roof, in which it seemed the sexton<sup>1</sup> had for some years been a lodger, but which he had lately deserted for<sup>2</sup> a wife and a cottage of his own, the child rose early in the morning and descended to the room where she had supped<sup>3</sup> last night. As the schoolmaster had already left his bed and gone out, she bestirred herself to make it neat and comfortable, and had just finished its arrangement when the kind host returned.

He thanked her many times, and said that the old dame

who usually did such offices <sup>4</sup> for him had gone to nurse the little scholar whom he had told her of. The child asked how he <sup>5</sup> was, and hoped <sup>6</sup> he was better.

"No," rejoined the schoolmaster, shaking his head sorrowfully. "No better. They even say he is worse."

"I am very sorry for that, Sir," said the child.

The poor schoolmaster appeared to be gratified by her earnest manner, but yet rendered more uneasy by it, for he added hastily that anxious people often magnified an evil, and thought it greater than it was; "for my part," he said, in his quiet, patient way, "I hope it is not so. I don't think he can be worse."

The child asked his leave to prepare breakfast,<sup>7</sup> and her grandfather coming down-stairs they all three partook of it together. While the meal was in progress, their host remarked that the old man seemed much fatigued, and evidently stood in need of rest.

"If the journey you have before you is a long one," he said, "and don't press you for one day,<sup>8</sup> you're very welcome to pass another night here. I should really be glad if you would, friend."

He saw that the old man looked at Nell,<sup>9</sup> uncertain whether to accept or decline his offer, and added—

"I shall be glad to have your young companion with me for one day. If you can do a charity<sup>10</sup> to a lone man, and rest yourself at the same time, do so. If you must proceed upon your journey, I wish you well through it,<sup>11</sup> and will walk a little way with you before school begins."

"What are we to do, Nell?" said the old man, irresolutely; "say what we're to do, dear."

It required no great persuasion to induce the child to answer that they had better accept the invitation and remain. She was happy to show her gratitude to the kind schoolmaster by busying herself in the performance of such household duties as his little cottage stood in need of. When these were done, she took some needlework from her basket, and sat herself

down upon a stool beside the lattice,<sup>12</sup> where the honeysuckle and woodbine entwined<sup>13</sup> their tender stems, and stealing<sup>14</sup> into the room filled it with their delicious breath. Her grandfather was basking in the sun outside, breathing the perfume of the flowers, and idly watching the clouds as they floated on before the light summer wind.

As the schoolmaster, after arranging the two forms<sup>15</sup> in due order, took his seat behind his desk and made other preparations for school, the child was apprehensive that she might be in the way,<sup>16</sup> and offered to withdraw to her little bedroom. But this he would not allow, and as he seemed pleased to have her there, she remained, busying herself with her work.

"Have you many scholars, Sir?" she asked.

The poor schoolmaster shook his head, and said that they barely filled the two forms.

"Are the others clever, Sir?" asked the child, glancing at the trophies<sup>17</sup> on the wall.

"Good boys," returned the schoolmaster, "good boys enough, my dear, but they'll never do<sup>18</sup> like that."

A small white-headed boy with a sunburnt face appeared at the door while he was speaking, and stopping there to make a rustic bow,<sup>19</sup> came in and took his seat upon one of the forms. The white-headed boy then put an open book, astonishingly dog's-eared,<sup>20</sup> upon his knees, and thrusting his hands into his pockets began counting the marbles<sup>21</sup> with which they were filled; displaying in the expression of his face a remarkable capacity of totally abstracting<sup>22</sup> his mind from the spelling on which his eyes were fixed. Soon afterwards another white-headed little boy came straggling in, and after him a red-headed lad, and after him two more with white heads, and then one with a flaxen poll,<sup>23</sup> and so on until the forms were occupied by a dozen boys or thereabouts, with heads of every colour but grey, and ranging in their ages from four years old to fourteen years, or more—for the legs of the youngest were a long way from the floor when he sat

upon the form, and the eldest was a heavy, good-tempered, foolish fellow, about half a head taller than the schoolmaster.

At the top of the first form—the post of honour in the school—was the vacant place of the little sick scholar, and at the head of the row of pegs on which those who came in <sup>24</sup> hats or caps were wont to hang them up, one was left empty. No boy attempted to violate the sanctity of seat or peg, <sup>25</sup> but many a one looked from the empty spaces to the schoolmaster, and whispered his idle neighbour behind his hand.

Then began the hum of conning over <sup>26</sup> lessons and getting them by heart, <sup>27</sup> the whispered jest and stealthy game, and all the noise and drawl of school; and in the midst of the din sat the poor schoolmaster, the very image of meekness and simplicity, vainly attempting to fix his mind upon the duties of the day, and to forget his little friend. But the tedium of his office reminded him more strongly of the willing scholar, and his thoughts were rambling from his pupils—it was plain.

None knew this better than the idlest boys, who, growing bolder with impunity, <sup>28</sup> waxed <sup>29</sup> louder and more daring—playing odd-or-even <sup>30</sup> under the master's eye, eating apples openly and without rebuke, pinching each other in sport or malice without the least reserve, and cutting their auto-graphs <sup>31</sup> in the very legs of his desk. The puzzled dunce, who stood beside it to say his lesson out of book, <sup>32</sup> looked no longer at the ceiling for forgotten words, but drew closer to the master's elbow and boldly cast his eye upon the page; the wag <sup>33</sup> of the little troop squinted and made grimaces <sup>34</sup> (at the smallest boy, of course), holding no book before his face, <sup>35</sup> and his approving audience knew no constraint in their delight. <sup>36</sup> If the master did chance to rouse himself and seem alive to what was going on, the noise subsided for a moment, and no eyes met his but wore <sup>37</sup> a studious and a deeply humble look; but the instant he relapsed again, it broke out afresh, and ten times louder than before.

Oh, how some of those idle fellows longed to be outside, and how they looked at the open door and window, as if they half meditated rushing violently out, plunging into the woods, and being wild boys and savages from that time forth. What rebellious thoughts of the cool river, and some shady bathing-place beneath willow trees with branches dipping in the water, kept tempting and urging that sturdy boy, who, with his shirt-collar unbuttoned and flung back as far as it could go, sat fanning his flushed face with a spelling-book, wishing himself a whale, or a tittle-bat, or a fly, or anything but a boy at school on that hot, broiling day! Heat! Ask that other boy whose seat being nearest to the door gave him opportunities of gliding out into the garden and driving his companions to madness<sup>38</sup> by dipping his face into the bucket of the well and then rolling on the grass—ask him if there were ever such a day as that, when even the bees were diving deep down into the cups of flowers and stopping there, as if they had made up their minds to retire from business and be manufacturers of honey no more. The day was made for laziness, and lying on one's back in green places, and staring at the sky till its brightness forced one to shut one's eyes and go to sleep; and was this a time to be poring over musty<sup>39</sup> books in a dark room, slighted<sup>40</sup> by the very sun itself? Monstrous!

Nell sat by the window, occupied with her work, but attentive still to all that passed, though sometimes rather timid of the boisterous boys. The lessons over, writing time began; and there being but one desk, and that the master's, each boy sat at it in turn and laboured at his crooked copy, while the master walked about. This was a quieter time; for he would come and look over the writer's shoulder, and tell him mildly to observe how such a<sup>41</sup> letter was turned in such a<sup>41</sup> copy on the wall, praise such an upstroke here and such a downstroke there, and bid him take it for his model. Then he would stop and tell them what the sick child had said last night, and how he had longed to be among them once again;



and such was the poor schoolmaster's gentle and affectionate manner, that the boys seemed quite remorseful that they had worried him so much, and were absolutely quiet—eating no apples, cutting no names, inflicting no pinches, and making no grimaces—for full two minutes afterwards.

"I think, boys," said the schoolmaster, when the clock struck twelve, "that I shall give an extra half-holiday this afternoon."

At this intelligence <sup>42</sup> the boys, led on and headed by the tall boy, raised a great shout, in the midst of which the master was seen to speak, but could not be heard. As he held up his hand, however, in token of his wish that they should be silent, they were considerate enough to leave off as soon as the longest-winded <sup>43</sup> among them were quite out of breath.<sup>44</sup>

"You must promise me first," said the schoolmaster, "that you'll not be noisy, or at least, if you are, that you'll go away and be so—away out of the village, I mean. I'm sure you wouldn't disturb your old playmate and companion."

There was a general murmur (and perhaps a very sincere one, for they were but boys) in the negative; and the tall boy, perhaps as sincerely as any of them, called those about him to witness that he had only shouted in a whisper.

"Then pray don't forget, there's my dear scholars," <sup>45</sup> said the schoolmaster, "what I have asked you, and do it as a favour to me. Be as happy as you can, and don't be unmindful that you are blessed with health. Good-bye all!"

"Thank'ee," <sup>46</sup> Sir," and "Good-bye, Sir," were said a great many times in a great variety of voices, and the boys went out very slowly and softly. But there was the sun shining, and there were the birds singing, as the sun only shines and the birds only sing on holidays and half-holidays; there were the trees waving to all free boys to climb and nestle among their leafy branches; the hay entreating them to come and scatter it to the pure air; the green corn, gently beckoning

towards wood and stream; the smooth ground, rendered smoother still by blending lights and shadows, inviting to runs and leaps, and long walks, God knows whither.<sup>47</sup> It was more than boy could bear, and with a joyous whoop the whole cluster took to their heels<sup>48</sup> and spread themselves about, shouting and laughing as they went.

"It's natural, thank Heaven!" said the poor schoolmaster, looking after them. "I'm very glad they didn't mind me!"<sup>49</sup>

Towards night an old woman came tottering up the garden as speedily as she could, and meeting the schoolmaster at the door, said he was to go to Dame West's directly, and had best run on<sup>50</sup> before her. He and the child were on the point of going out together for a walk, and without relinquishing her hand, the schoolmaster hurried away, leaving the messenger to follow as she might.<sup>51</sup>

They stopped at a cottage-door, and the schoolmaster knocked softly at it with his hand. It was opened without loss of time. They entered a room where a little group of women were gathered about one older than the rest, who was crying very bitterly, and sat wringing her hands and rocking herself to and fro.

"Oh, dame!" said the schoolmaster, drawing near her chair, "is it so bad as this?"

"He's going fast," cried the old woman; "my grandson's dying. It's all along of<sup>52</sup> you. You shouldn't see him now,<sup>53</sup> but for<sup>54</sup> his being so earnest on it. This is what his learning has brought him to. Oh, dear, dear, dear, what can I do?"

"Do not say that I am in any fault," urged the gentle schoolmaster. "I am not hurt,<sup>55</sup> dame. No, no. You are in great distress of mind, and don't mean what you say. I am sure you don't."

"I do," returned the old woman. "I mean it all. If he hadn't been poring over his books out of fear of you, he would have been well and merry now, I know he would."

The schoolmaster looked round upon the other women

as if to entreat some one among them to say a kind word for him; but they shook their heads, and murmured to each other that they never thought there was much good in learning, and that this convinced them. Without saying a word in reply, or giving them a look of reproach, he followed the old woman who had summoned him (and who had now rejoined them) into another room, where his infant friend, half-dressed, lay stretched upon a bed.

He was a very young boy—quite a little child. His hair still hung in curls about his face, and his eyes were very bright; but their light was of Heaven, not earth. The schoolmaster took a seat beside him, and stooping over the pillow whispered his name. The boy sprang up, stroked his face with his hand, and threw his wasted arms around his neck, crying out that he was his dear kind friend.

“I hope I always was. I meant to be, God knows,” said the poor schoolmaster.

“Who is that?” said the boy, seeing Nell. “I am afraid to kiss her, lest I should make her ill. Ask her to shake hands with me.”

The sobbing child came closer up, and took the little languid hand in hers. Releasing his again after a time, the sick boy laid him gently down.

“You remember the garden, Harry,” whispered the schoolmaster, anxious to rouse him, for a dullness seemed gathering upon the child, “and how pleasant it used to be in the evening time? You must make haste to visit it again, for I think the very flowers have missed you, and are less gay than they used to be. You will come soon, my dear, very soon now—won’t you?”

The boy smiled faintly—so very, very faintly—and put his hand upon his friend’s grey head. He moved his lips too, but no voice came from them—no, not a sound.

In the silence that ensued, the hum of distant voices borne upon the evening air came floating through the open window.

“What’s that?” said the sick child, opening his eyes.

"The boys at play upon the green."

He took a handkerchief from his pillow, and tried to wave it above his head. But the feeble arm dropped powerless down.

"Shall I do it?" said the schoolmaster.

"Please wave it at the window," was the faint reply. "Tie it to the lattice. Some of them may see it there. Perhaps they'll think of me, and look this way."

He raised his head, and glanced from the fluttering signal to his idle bat that lay with slate and book and other boyish property upon a table in the room. And then he laid him<sup>56</sup> softly down once more, and asked if the little girl were there, for he could not see her.

She stepped forward, and pressed the passive hand that lay upon the coverlet.<sup>57</sup> The two old friends and companions—for such they were, though they were man and child—held each other in a long embrace, and then the little scholar turned his face towards the wall, and fell asleep.

The poor schoolmaster sat in the same place, holding the small, cold hand in his, and chafing<sup>58</sup> it. It was but the hand of a dead child. He felt that; and yet he chafed it still, and could not lay it down.

#### NOTES

1. The officer who takes care of the church building.
2. In favour of; in order to take instead.
3. Taken supper (the evening meal).
4. Duties.
5. The sick schoolboy, of whom we are to hear later.
6. Expressed the hope.
7. The morning meal. (Pronounce "brekfast".)
8. Your business is not so urgent that the loss of a day makes any difference.
9. Colloquial for "Helen", the grand-daughter of the old man.
10. Kindness.
11. Success in your journey to the end.
12. A kind of window made of coarse strips of wood crossing each other so as to make diamond shapes.

13. Twisted round each other.
14. Coming stealthily (he means the scent of their flowers came stealthily, &c.).
15. Benches.
16. A source of trouble.
17. This word usually means shields or cups won in competition; here it means specimens of handwriting or drawing.
18. Do work (draw or write).
19. Bow (pronounce as in "cow") in the rough fashion of a country boy.
20. With the pages crumpled at the corners (in the shape of a dog's ear) by being frequently turned over.
21. Small balls made of glass or clay, used by boys in playing games.
22. Taking away.
23. A humorous word for "head of hair" (pronounce "pole").
24. Wearing.
25. I.e. they treated the seat and the hat-peg of the sick boy as sacred. If another boy should use his seat or hat-peg, this would violate (hurt) their sanctity (sacredness).
26. Studying.
27. It was a primitive kind of school. We must not imitate this way of learning lessons.
28. Because they were not punished.
29. Gradually became.
30. A game in which one boy holds one or two small articles in his hand, and another boy tries to guess the number.
31. A person's autograph is his name written or carved by himself.
32. Without looking at the book.
33. Humorist.
34. Twisted his face into amusing shapes.
35. On other days if he were twisting his face to make the little boy laugh and so get him into trouble with the teacher, he would put his book before his face so that the teacher would not see his tricks. This day he "made grimaces" quite openly.
36. Their delight was unbounded.
37. Which did not wear.
38. Making them mad with envy when they saw him enjoying himself while they were shut up in the hot schoolroom.
39. Old and uninteresting.
40. Despised. (In a poetic way Dickens suggests that the room was dark because the sun disdained to enter it.)
41. A certain.
42. On hearing this news.



43. Those with the greatest supply of breath.
44. Ironical. They were kind enough to stop shouting when none of them could shout any longer.
45. This is a parenthesis, i.e. an explanatory clause thrown in without affecting the construction. It means: "(and in this way you will show that you are my dear scholars)".
46. Colloquial for "thank thee" (i.e. thank you).
47. (That seemed to call on boys to run about and take long walks) to unknown destinations (i.e. walks of which only God knew the end).
48. Idiom. Ran as fast as they could.
49. Paid no attention to what I said.
50. Idiom. It would be best that he should run on.
51. As quickly as she could.
52. Colloquial. "Because of (you)."
53. You would not be allowed to see him now.
54. If it were not (that he is so eager to see you).
55. Offended.
56. Reflexive. "Laid himself," i.e. "lay".
57. Bed-cover.
58. Gently rubbing (in order to warm it).

## QUESTIONS

1. Do you like to read the story of the death of a good little boy or girl? Say frankly all that you think about this.
2. Describe the kind of person you think a village schoolmaster ought to be.
3. Whether would you rather be in a country school or a town school? Explain your answer.
4. Compare the Primary School you attended with the village school that Dickens describes.
5. Tell the story of the death of the little scholar as Little Nell might have told it.
6. Why did some of the village women in the story object to school education? Why do many parents in India object to send their children to school? What do you think of the reasons in both cases?

## Mrs. Gaskell

*Cranford* is the best-known novel of Mrs. Gaskell (1810-1866). In it she describes in a charmingly simple style, with sympathy, pathos, keen observation, and delightful humour, the life of somewhat poor, middle-class ladies in a small English country-town in the middle of last century. The village she calls Cranford in the novel was really Knutsford, near Manchester.

Just before our extract begins, the authoress has been describing the alarm of the ladies at the constant rumour that thieves were at work in the village.

### THE PANIC

After we had duly condemned the want of candour which Mr. Hoggins<sup>1</sup> had evinced,<sup>2</sup> and abused men in general, taking him for the representative and type,<sup>3</sup> we got round to the subject<sup>4</sup> about which we had been talking when Miss Pole<sup>5</sup> came in; namely, how far, in the present disturbed state of the country, we could venture to accept an invitation which Miss Matty<sup>6</sup> had just received from Mrs. Forrester,<sup>7</sup> to come as usual and keep the anniversary of her wedding-day by drinking tea with her at five o'clock, and playing a quiet pool<sup>8</sup> afterwards.

Mrs. Forrester had said that she asked us with some diffidence,<sup>9</sup> because the roads were, she feared, very unsafe. But she suggested that perhaps one of us would not object to take the sedan,<sup>10</sup> and that the others, by walking briskly, might keep up with the long trot of the chairmen,<sup>11</sup> and so we might all arrive safely at Over Place, a suburb of the town. (No; that<sup>12</sup> is too large an expression: a small cluster

of houses separated from Cranford by about two hundred yards of a dark and lonely lane.<sup>13</sup>) There was no doubt but that a similar note was awaiting Miss Pole at home; so her call was a very fortunate affair, as it enabled us to consult together. We would all much rather have declined this invitation; but we felt that it would not be quite kind to Mrs. Forrester, who would otherwise be left to a solitary retrospect<sup>14</sup> of her not very happy or fortunate life.<sup>15</sup> Miss Matty and Miss Pole had been visitors on this occasion for many years, and now they gallantly determined to nail their colours to the mast,<sup>16</sup> and to go through Darkness Lane rather than fail in loyalty to their friend.

But when the evening came, Miss Matty (for it was she who was voted into the chair,<sup>17</sup> as she had a cold<sup>18</sup>), before being shut down in the sedan, like jack-in-a-box,<sup>19</sup> implored the chairmen, whatever might befall, not to run away and leave her fastened up there, to be murdered; and even after they had promised, I saw her tighten her features into the stern determination of a martyr,<sup>20</sup> and she gave me a melancholy and ominous shake of the head through the glass.<sup>21</sup> However, we got there safely, only rather out of breath, for it was who could trot hardest<sup>22</sup> through Darkness Lane, and I am afraid poor Miss Matty was sadly jolted.

Mrs. Forrester had made extra preparations, in acknowledgment of our exertion in coming to see her through such dangers. The usual forms of genteel ignorance as to what her servants might send up<sup>23</sup> were all gone through; and harmony and Preference<sup>24</sup> seemed likely to be the order of the evening,<sup>25</sup> but for<sup>26</sup> an interesting conversation that began, I don't know how, but which had relation, of course, to the robbers who infested the neighbourhood of Cranford.

Having braved the dangers of Darkness Lane, and thus having a little stock of reputation for courage to fall back upon,<sup>27</sup> and also, I dare say, desirous of proving ourselves superior to men (*videlicet*<sup>28</sup> Mr. Hoggins) in the article of candour,<sup>29</sup> we began to relate our individual fears, and the

private precautions we each of us took. I owned that my pet apprehension<sup>30</sup> was eyes—eyes looking at me, and watching me, glittering out from some dull, flat, wooden surface; and that if I dared to go up to my looking-glass, when I was panic-stricken, I should certainly turn it round, with its back towards me, for fear of seeing eyes behind me looking out of the darkness.

I saw Miss Matty nerving herself up<sup>31</sup> for a confession; and at last out it came. She owned that, ever since she had been a girl, she had dreaded being caught by her last leg, just as she was getting into bed, by some one concealed under it. She said, when she was younger and more active, she used to take a flying leap from a distance, and so bring both her legs up safely into bed at once; but this had always annoyed Deborah,<sup>32</sup> who piqued herself<sup>33</sup> upon getting into bed gracefully, and she had given it up in consequence. But now the old terror would often come over her, especially since Miss Pole's house had been attacked (we had got quite to believe in the fact of the attack having taken place),<sup>34</sup> and yet it was very unpleasant to think of looking under a bed, and seeing a man concealed, with a great, fierce face staring out at you; so she had bethought herself of something—perhaps I had noticed that she had told Martha to buy her a penny ball, such as children play with<sup>35</sup>—and now she rolled this ball under the bed every night: if it came out on the other side, well and good; if not she always took care to have her hand on the bell-rope, and meant to call out John and Harry just as if she expected men-servants to answer her ring.<sup>36</sup>

We all applauded this ingenious contrivance, and Miss Matty sank back into satisfied silence, with a look at Mrs. Forrester as if to ask for *her* private weakness.

Mrs. Forrester looked askance<sup>37</sup> at Miss Pole, and tried to change the subject a little by telling us that she had borrowed a boy from one of the neighbouring cottages and promised his parents a hundredweight of coals at Christmas, and his

supper every evening, for the loan of him at nights. She had instructed him in his possible duties when he first came; and, finding him sensible, she had given him the Major's sword. (the Major was her late husband), and desired him to put it very carefully behind his pillow at night, turning the edge towards the head of the pillow. He was a sharp lad, she was sure; for, spying out the Major's cocked hat, he had said, if he might have that to wear, he was sure he would frighten two Englishmen, or four Frenchmen, any day.<sup>38</sup> But she had impressed upon him anew that he was to lose no time in putting on hats or anything else; but, if he heard any noise, he was to run at it with his drawn sword.

On my suggesting that some accident might occur from such slaughterous and indiscriminate directions,<sup>39</sup> and that he might rush on Jenny<sup>40</sup> getting up to wash,<sup>41</sup> and have spitted<sup>42</sup> her before he had discovered that she was not a Frenchman, Mrs. Forrester said she did not think that that was likely, for he was a very sound sleeper, and generally had to be well shaken or cold-pigged<sup>43</sup> in a morning before they could rouse him. She sometimes thought such dead sleep must be owing to the hearty suppers the poor lad ate, for he was half-starved at home, and she told Jenny to see that he got a good meal at night.

Still this was no confession of Mrs. Forrester's peculiar timidity, and we urged her to tell us what she thought would frighten her more than anything. She paused, and stirred the fire, and snuffed<sup>44</sup> the candles, and then she said, in a sounding whisper—

“Ghosts!”

She looked at Miss Pole, as much as to say, she had declared it, and would stand by<sup>45</sup> it. Such a look was a challenge in itself. Miss Pole came down upon her with<sup>46</sup> indigestion, spectral illusions,<sup>47</sup> optical delusions,<sup>48</sup> and a great deal out of Dr. Ferrier<sup>49</sup> and Dr. Hibbert<sup>49</sup> besides. Miss Matty had rather a leaning to<sup>50</sup> ghosts, as I have mentioned before, and what little she did say was all on Mrs.



Forrester's side, who, emboldened by sympathy, protested that ghosts were a part of her religion; that surely she, the widow of a major in the army, knew what to be frightened at, and what not; in short, I never saw Mrs. Forrester so warm<sup>51</sup> either before or since, for she was a gentle, meek, enduring old lady in most things. Not all the elder-wine<sup>52</sup> that ever was mulled<sup>53</sup> could this night wash out the remembrance of this difference<sup>54</sup> between Miss Pole and her hostess. Indeed, when the elder-wine was brought in, it gave rise to a new burst of discussion; for Jenny, the little maiden who staggered under the tray,<sup>55</sup> had to give evidence of having seen a ghost with her own eyes, not so many<sup>56</sup> nights ago, in Darkness Lane, the very lane we were to go through on our way home.

In spite of the uncomfortable feeling which this last consideration<sup>57</sup> gave me, I could not help being amused at Jenny's position which was exceedingly like that of a witness being examined and cross-examined by two counsels<sup>58</sup> who are not at all scrupulous about asking<sup>59</sup> leading questions.<sup>60</sup> The conclusion I arrived at was, that Jenny had certainly seen something beyond what a fit of indigestion would have caused.<sup>61</sup> A lady all in white, and without her head, was what she deposed<sup>62</sup> and adhered to,<sup>63</sup> supported by a consciousness of the secret sympathy of her mistress under the withering scorn<sup>64</sup> with which Miss Pole regarded her. And not only she, but many others, had seen this headless lady, who sat by the roadside wringing her hands as in deep grief. Mrs. Forrester looked at us from time to time with an air of conscious triumph; but then she had not to pass through Darkness Lane before she could bury her head beneath her own familiar bed-clothes.<sup>65</sup>

We preserved a discreet<sup>66</sup> silence as to the headless lady while we were putting on our things<sup>67</sup> to go home, for there was no knowing how near the ghostly head and ears might be,<sup>68</sup> or what spiritual connexion<sup>69</sup> they might be keeping up with the unhappy body in Darkness Lane; and, therefore,

even Miss Pole felt that it was as well not to speak lightly on such subjects, for fear of vexing or insulting that woe-begone trunk.<sup>70</sup> At least, so I conjecture;<sup>71</sup> for instead of the busy clatter<sup>72</sup> usual in the operation,<sup>73</sup> we tied on our cloaks as sadly as mutes at a funeral.<sup>74</sup> Miss Matty drew the curtains round the windows of the chair<sup>75</sup> to shut out the disagreeable sights,<sup>76</sup> and the men, either because they were in spirits that<sup>77</sup> their labours were so nearly ended, or because they were going downhill, set off at such a round<sup>78</sup> and merry pace, that it was all Miss Pole and I could do<sup>79</sup> to keep up with them.<sup>80</sup> She had breath for nothing but an imploring "Don't leave me!" uttered as she clutched my arm so tightly that I could not have quitted her, ghost or no ghost.<sup>81</sup> What a relief it was when the men, weary of their burden and their quick trot, stopped just where Headingley Causeway branches off from Darkness Lane! Miss Pole unloosed me and caught at one of the men—

"Could not you—could not you take Miss Matty round by Headingley Causeway?—the pavement in Darkness Lane jolts<sup>82</sup> so,<sup>83</sup> and she is not very strong."<sup>84</sup>

A smothered voice<sup>85</sup> was heard from the inside of the chair—

"Oh! pray<sup>86</sup> go on! What is the matter? What is the matter? I will give you sixpence<sup>87</sup> more to go on very fast; pray don't stop here."

"And I'll give you a shilling,"<sup>88</sup> said Miss Pole, with tremulous dignity, "if you'll go by Headingley Causeway."

The two men grinned acquiescence<sup>89</sup> and took up the chair, and went along the causeway, which certainly answered Miss Pole's kind purpose of saving Miss Matty's bones;<sup>90</sup> for it was covered with soft, thick mud, and even a fall there would have been easy till the getting-up came, when there might have been some difficulty in extrication.<sup>91</sup>

## NOTES

1. Mr. Hoggins was the village doctor. There was a rumour that he had been robbed at his own door by two ruffians. Mr. Hoggins scoffed at this and said it was an exaggerated account of the loss of some meat, which his cat had stolen. Miss Pole, who had interviewed him, refused to accept this version and said it was due to want of candour (truthfulness).

2. Exhibited.

3. Assuming that all men were like Mr. Hoggins.

4. We gradually began to talk of the subject.

5. One of the maiden ladies in Cranford "society".

6. Miss Matilda Jenkins, the elderly maiden lady with whom the authoress was staying on a visit to the village.

7. She is described as a widow, somewhat deaf, kind, and gentle, shabbily dressed.

8. A game of cards.

9. Hesitation (literally: self-distrust).

10. In those days people who could not afford a carriage hired a sedan-chair, i.e. a chair for one, with projecting poles to enable the "chairmen" to carry it.

11. Keep pace with the long running steps of the chairmen.

12. "That" means the word "suburb". The place was too small to be called a "suburb".

13. Narrow country road between two hedges.

14. Left to look back alone upon (without the company of her friends).

15. She was not only a widow, but much poorer than formerly.

16. A metaphor from naval warfare: "to take a brave resolution from which they could not withdraw". (A ship surrenders by hauling down her flag from the mast. If the flag is nailed to the mast, she has no means of surrendering.)

17. Notice the double meaning. Here: "asked to take the sedan".

18. In the sedan, she would be protected from the cold air.

19. A doll, worked with springs, which suddenly shoots up when the lid of its box is opened.

20. Make her face rigid like that of a martyr about to die for his religion.

21. Which I could see through the window of the sedan.

22. Idiom. "It was a case of trying to see who could trot fastest." (They seemed to be running a race.)

23. Each of these ladies usually had no servant but an inexperienced village maid. The lady had to superintend every detail

of the housekeeping. Yet they pretended that, like wealthy ladies with many servants, they did not know what kind of refreshments the servants might "send up" from the kitchen to the drawing-room.

24. A card game.

25. Idiom. "The course of the evening's entertainment" would have been a harmonious game of cards.

26. Except for (if this conversation had not occurred).

27. To use as a reserve, to rely upon.

28. Namely. "Though speaking of 'men', they had only one man in mind."

29. The matter of truthfulness.

30. Favourite fear (a contradictory but idiomatic expression).

31. Screwing up her courage.

32. Her elder sister, now dead.

33. Prided herself, took pride (in).

34. Miss Pole had seen some suspicious-looking characters near her house. The story grew till it became a tale of an actual attack.

35. This parenthesis gives Miss Matty's words in indirect speech.

36. "John" and "Harry" being the names of imaginary men-servants.

37. Looked sideways, in a questioning manner.

38. An illustration of the ignorant English villager's opinion of the French, after the English victory in the Napoleonic Wars.

39. Orders to attack anything that made a noise without inquiring what it was.

40. Mrs. Forrester's little maid.

41. Rising in the morning and going to make her toilet.

42. Thrust (the sword) through (her).

43. Have cold water thrown on him.

44. Trimmed; removed the burnt part of the wick.

45. Adhere to; maintain.

46. Attacked her with (the suggestion that the ghosts she had seen were only bad dreams due to) indigestion. . . .

47. Deceptive appearances in the form of spectres (ghosts).

48. Thinking one has seen something when it is really something else (literally: "being cheated by one's eyes").

49. A writer on ghosts.

50. An inclination towards a belief in.

51. A mild word for "angry".

52. Wine made from the fruit of the elder tree.

53. Made into a hot drink with sugar, spices, &c. The meaning is: "Wine is supposed to make people forget their quarrels, but did not do so on this occasion".

54. A mild word for "quarrel".
55. Owing to the weight of the tray she was carrying. A tray is a flat vessel of wood or metal on which tea-cups and plates of cake are placed.
56. Not very many.
57. Thought or idea, viz. that on my way home I must pass through the lane where the ghost had been seen.
58. Lawyers.
59. Do not hesitate to ask.
60. Questions in which the questioner suggests the answer he or she wants.
61. Had seen something unusual that was not entirely imaginary.
62. The authoress used terms taken from the law courts. "Deposed to" means "stated in her evidence that she had seen".
63. Continued to maintain, when cross-examined.
64. Scorn that makes one shrink and wither like a dried leaf.
65. The authoress humorously says that it was easy for Mrs. Forrester to accept the story of the ghost; for she was in her own home and could comfortably go to bed in safety; but the others before they could reach their homes had to pass through the lane where the ghost was supposed to have been seen.
66. Cautious; wise.
67. Putting on our out-of-door garments.
68. The authoress humorously says that though the ghost's body might be in Darkness Lane, yet her head and ears might be (though invisible) in the very room where the guests were. The ghost might be angry if she heard them professing not to believe in her.
69. Connexion in the world of spirits or ghosts.
70. The pitiful body that had lost its head.
71. I can only guess this; for none of the ladies frankly said that they were afraid.
72. Pleasant noise of talking.
73. Process of putting on their outer garments.
74. In those days men and boys were hired as professional mourners (called "mutes") at funerals. The custom has fortunately died out.
75. Closed the window curtains of the sedan-chair.
76. Such as ghosts.
77. Cheerful because.
78. Vigorous.
79. Required our utmost exertions.
80. Keep pace with them; go as fast as they did.
81. Whether there was a ghost or not.
82. Literally: "shakes; causes sudden and unpleasant move-



ments". (The pavement is uneven and therefore "jolts" a passenger in a sedan-chair.)

83. So much; so badly.

84. The road to Miss Pole's home lay through Headingley Causeway (a causeway is a raised road above wet ground). The road to Miss Matty's home lay through Darkness Lane. If the chairmen carried Miss Matty to her home by the nearest way, Miss Pole would be left to go home alone. So she tried to persuade the chairmen to take the road that passed her house, but would not give the true reason, viz. her fear.

85. Since the sedan was closed and the curtains drawn, Miss Matty's voice sounded indistinct as if she were being smothered.

86. The full phrase is "I pray you".

87. A silver coin worth a little over five annas.

88. A silver coin worth twice sixpence.

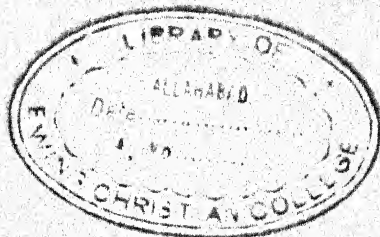
89. Smiled broadly as a sign that they accepted her proposal (they were smiling also because they knew her reason for the proposal).

90. From being jolted.

91. Pulling oneself out of (the mud).

### QUESTIONS

1. Give examples from this passage of Mrs. Gaskell's humour.
2. Give examples, from your own experience or from books, of curious fears that people have entertained.
3. Did Mrs. Gaskell believe in ghosts? Why is the belief in ghosts so difficult to destroy?
4. Give a brief account of the party that Mrs. Forrester gave to celebrate the anniversary of her wedding.



## Sir Philip Gibbs

The following passage is from *Adventures in Journalism*, the book in which Sir Philip Gibbs, journalist and novelist, tells some of his experiences as a writer for the press. Sir Philip established a high reputation for himself as a newspaper correspondent during the Great War. In this passage he describes some of the results of the marvellous progress made in mechanical science during the first twenty-one years of this century.

### THE AEROPLANE, THE TAXI, AND THE CINEMA

It was, I think, in 1900 that I encountered the first motor "taxi"<sup>1</sup> in Paris, one of those rattle-bone<sup>2</sup> machines which, as far as Paris is concerned, have not improved enormously since that time. But it seemed nothing short of a miracle then, and it was not until several years later that they ousted<sup>3</sup> the dear old hansom<sup>4</sup> of London, which now survives only as an historical relic.<sup>5</sup>

. . . . .

I.—I remember being sent by my paper<sup>6</sup> to describe a night journey in a motor-car as a new and exciting adventure, as it certainly was to me at that time when I travelled down to the Land's End,<sup>7</sup> and saw, for the first time, the white glare of headlights on passing milestones and bewildered cattle, and passed through little sleeping villages where the noise of our coming was heard as a portent,<sup>8</sup> by people who jumped out of bed and stared through the window blinds. In those days a man who owned a car was regarded as a very rich and adventurous fellow, as well as something of a freak,

and he was ridiculed with immense enjoyment by pedestrians when he was discovered, frequently, lying in the mud beneath his machine which had hopelessly broken down. Indeed, many people had a passionate hostility to motorists and motor-ing, and a great friend of mine so hated the sight of an auto-mobile that he used to throw stones after them. He was a rich man, with carriages and horses, which he vowed he would never abandon for "a filthy, stinking motor-car". Now he never moves a yard without one. I am the only consistent enemy of motor-cars left in the world. I hate them like poison.

For professional purposes, however, I have been a great motorist, and I suppose that during the four and a half years of war I must have covered sixty thousand miles. I have hired motor-cars in England, France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Austria, Poland, Russia, Turkey, Asia Minor, and the United States. I have had every sort of accident that may happen to a motorist this side of death.<sup>9</sup> Wheels have come off and gone rolling ahead of me down steep hills. Axles have broken beneath me. I have been dashed into level-crossing gates, I have escaped an express train by something like three inches, and I have had my car smashed to bits by a collision with a lorry which laid my right arm out of action<sup>10</sup> for three months.

Yet I was not such a "hoodoo"<sup>11</sup> as a motorist as a delightful friend of mine named Coldstream. Whenever he sat in a motor-car he used to expect something to happen to it, and it always did. The door handle would drop off, just as a preliminary warning. Then one of the cylinders would miss fire, as another sign of impending disaster. Then the back axle would break, or something would happen to prevent any further journey. Once, going with him from Arras<sup>12</sup> to Amiens,<sup>12</sup> we put two motor-cars out of action, and then borrowed an ambulance<sup>13</sup> about ten miles from Amiens. After the first four miles it broke down hopelessly, and, finally, we had to walk the rest of the way.

II.—Moving pictures have caused something like a revolution in social life, and on balance <sup>14</sup> I believe they have been and are an immense boon to mankind—and womankind, especially in small country towns and villages which, until that invention, had no form of entertainment beyond an occasional magic-lantern show, or “penny reading”.<sup>15</sup> They bring romance and adventure to the farm labourer, the errand boy, the village girl, and the doctor’s daughter, and despite a lot of foolish stuff shown on the screen, give a larger outlook on life, and some sense of the beauty and grace of life, to the great masses. They give them also a comparison of the present with the past, and of one country with another. Perhaps in showing the contrast between one class and another, in extremes of luxury and penury, they are creating a spirit of social discontent which may have serious consequences—but that remains to be seen.

I was an actor, for journalistic purposes,<sup>16</sup> in one of the first film dramas ever produced in England. The first scene was an elopement by motor-car, and the little company of actors and actresses assembled in the front garden of a large empty mansion in a suburb in the south-east of London, namely Herne Hill. The heroine and the gentleman who played the part of her irate father entered the house, and disappeared.

Meanwhile, a number of business men of Herne Hill, on their way to work in the city, as well as various tradesmen and errand boys, were astonished by the sight of two motor-cars, half-concealed behind the bushes in the drive,<sup>17</sup> and by the group of peculiar-looking people, apparently engaged in some criminal enterprise. They were still more astonished and alarmed at the following events:

1. A good-looking youth advanced towards the house from a hiding-place in the bushes, and threw pebbles at a window of the house.
2. The window opened, and a beautiful girl appeared and wafted kisses to the boy below. Then disappeared.
3. The front door opened, and the beautiful girl rushed

into the arms of the boy. After ardent embraces, he came with her to one of the motor-cars, placed her inside, and drove off at a furious pace.

4. Another window in the house opened, and an elderly gentleman looked out, waving his arms in obvious indignation, bordering on apoplexy.<sup>18</sup>

5. Shortly afterwards, he rushed out of the front door after the departing motor-car (which had made several false starts), with clenched fists, and the words, "My God! My God! . . . My daughter! My daughter!"

By this time the Herne Hill inhabitants gathered at the gate were excited and distressed. One gentleman shouted loudly for the police. Another chivalrously remarked that he was no spoil-sport,<sup>19</sup> and if the girl wanted to elope it was none of their business. A fox terrier belonging to the butcher boy, ran, barking furiously, at the despairing father, who was still panting down the drive. Then the usual policeman<sup>20</sup> strolled up and said, "What's all this 'ere?"<sup>21</sup> Explanation and laughter followed. Nothing like it had ever been seen before in respectable Herne Hill, but they had heard of the cinema and its amazing drama. So this was how it was done! Well, well!<sup>22</sup>

Astonishing things happened in that early film drama, as old as the hills now, but novel and sensational then. The irate father giving chase in another powerful<sup>23</sup> motor (which moved at about ten miles an hour) was arrested by bogus<sup>24</sup> policemen with red noses,<sup>25</sup> thrown off the scent<sup>26</sup> by comic traps,<sup>27</sup> and finally blown up in an explosion of the car, creating terror in a Surrey<sup>28</sup> village, which thought that anarchists were loose.<sup>29</sup> After many further incidents the runaway couple were married in a little old church—I walked in front of the camera as one of the guests—while two of the actors were posted as spies to give warning of any approach of the country clergyman. He, dear man,<sup>30</sup> appeared in the opposite direction, and was horrified to find a wedding going on without his knowledge,<sup>31</sup> and an unknown parson (who



had dressed behind a hedge),<sup>32</sup> officiating<sup>33</sup> in the most unctuous<sup>34</sup> way. For me it was a day of unceasing laughter, for there was something enormously ludicrous about the surprise of the passers-by, who could not guess at what was the real meaning of the mock drama. Now it is a commonplace, and no one is surprised when a company of film actors take possession of the road.

III.—Looking back upon the almost miraculous progress of aviation, it seems to me, and to many others, that humanity rose very high and fell very low<sup>35</sup> when it discovered at last the secret of flight. For thousands of years, perhaps from the days when primitive man stood in a lonely world and watched the easy grace, the swift and joyous liberty of the birds above his head, there has been in the soul of man the dream of that power to fly. Men lost their lives in vain attempts, as far back as the myth of Icarus,<sup>36</sup> whose waxed wings melted in the sun. Scientists studied the mechanism of birds, tethered their imagination to rising kites,<sup>37</sup> sought vainly for the power to lift a heavy body from the earth. At last it was found in the petrol-driven engine, and men were seen to rise higher than the clouds, and to travel through the great spaces of the sky like gods. A pity that this achievement came just in time for world-war, and that the power and beauty of flight was used for dropping death upon crowded cities and the armies of youth, crouching in ditches beneath those destroying dragons!

The first time I realized the almost limitless possibilities of heavier-than-air machines was at Doncaster<sup>38</sup> when Colonel Cody was among the competitors. The Doncaster meeting had been a great failure from the public point of view. There was very little flying, owing to bad weather and elementary aeroplanes. The aviators sulked in their tents,<sup>39</sup> and the gloomy atmosphere was deepened by some financial troubles of the organizers, so that the gate money<sup>40</sup> was seized to liquidate their debts. At least, that was the rumour,

as I remember it. But there was one cheerful man, ever ready with a friendly word and jest. That was Colonel Cody who, after many kite-flying experiments, on behalf of the British Government, which had failed to give him any financial aid, was putting the finishing touches to a home-made biplane, with the help of his son.

It was a monstrous and clumsy affair. It had great struts<sup>41</sup> of bamboo, and enormous spread<sup>42</sup> of wing space, and a petrol tank weighing half a ton. This structure, which was tied up with string, and old wire, and bits of iron, was nicknamed St. Paul's Cathedral,<sup>43</sup> and Noah's Ark,<sup>44</sup> and all kinds of ridiculous names, by correspondents who did not believe in its powers of flight. But they loved to talk to old Cody, dressed like "Buffalo Bill"<sup>45</sup> (though he was no relation of the original Colonel Cody of showman fame) with long hair which he used to wind up under his hat and fasten with an enormous bodkin with which he also used to pick his teeth. I laughed loud and long at the first sight of his immense aeroplane, and refused to credit his childlike assertion that it would fly like a bird. But one morning early, he enlisted volunteers to haul it out of its hangar and set its engine going with the noise of seven devils. "Poor old Cody!" said a friend of mine. "One might as well try to fly with a railway engine!"

Hardly were the words out of his mouth, than<sup>46</sup> the great thing rose, and not like a bird, but gracefully and gentle as a butterfly, was wafted above our heads, and flew steadily across the field. We chased it, shouting and cheering. It seemed to us like a miracle. It was a miracle—man's conquest of flight.

Presently after three minutes, I think, "something happened". The great aeroplane staggered back, flagged,<sup>47</sup> and took a nose-dive<sup>48</sup> to earth, where it lay with its engine dug deep into the soil and a confusion of twisted wires and broken canvas about it. With two or three other men—among them a brilliant and well-remembered journalist, Harold

Ashton—I ran forward, breathlessly, and helped to draw Cody from beneath the wreckage, dazed and bloody, but not badly hurt. His first words were triumphant: "What did I tell you, boys? It flew like a bird!"

It was patched up again, and flew again, until Cody was killed. He was truly one of the heroic pioneers, obstinate in faith, heavily in debt, unhelped by any soul, except that son of his who believed in "the old dad". It was he who cured me of scepticism. After seeing his heavy machine fly round the course, I knew that the game had been won, and that one day, not one man, but many, might be carried in an aeroplane on great strong wings.

One of the most exciting episodes of those early days of record-making was when Graham White competed with Paulhan in a race from London to Manchester. With Ernest Perris, the news editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, and Rowan, one of the correspondents, I set out in a powerful motor-car, to follow the flight, which began shortly before dark. Graham White's plan was to fly by night—the first time such an exploit had been attempted—and he thought that cur headlights might help as some guide<sup>49</sup> outside London. We lost him almost at once, and after a wild motor ride at a breakneck pace in the darkness, decided that we should never see him again. He had probably hit a tree, and was lying dead in some field. Many other correspondents had motored out, but we lost them all, and halted at the side of a lonely road where we heard voices shouting to each other in French.

"Perhaps they are Graham White's mechanics," I said to Perris. This guess proved to be right, and upon inquiry from the men, we found that Graham White had had engine trouble, and had alighted in some garden not far from where we stood.

It was a little country village, though I cannot recollect its name or whereabouts, and after tramping across fields, we saw a house with lights shining from its windows. It

was the village rectory,<sup>50</sup> remote from the world and all the excitement of life, until, out of the darkness, a great bird had dropped into the garden, with the noise of a dragon. From the wings of the bird a young man, dirty, half-dazed, freezing cold, and drunk with fatigue, staggered out, banged at the door, and asked for food and a place to sleep. The clergyman's wife and the clergyman's daughter rose to the occasion,<sup>51</sup> as Englishwomen do in times of crisis. They dressed themselves, made some coffee, cooked some boiled eggs, lighted big fires, and unfroze the bird man. He was already abed, after a plea to be called at the first gleam of dawn, when we arrived. Presently other motorists arrived, all cold and hungry and muddy. The country rectory was invaded by these wild-looking people, and the clergyman's pretty daughter, with shining eyes, served us all with coffee and eggs, and seemed to enjoy the excitement as the greatest thing that had happened in her life. I have no recollection of the clergyman. I dare say the poor man was bewildered by the sudden tumult in his house of peace, and left everything to his capable wife and the swift grace of his little daughter.

## NOTES

1. A "taxi-cab" is a "cab" (carriage or motor) provided with a "taxi-meter" (literally "fare-measure"), i.e. an automatic apparatus for showing the fare due at any moment.

2. With poor springs, so that the passengers are badly shaken, and their bones seem to rattle.

3. Completely drove out (pronounce "owsted").

4. A light, two-wheeled horse carriage formerly much used in England. The driver sat perched on a seat behind the cab and the reins went over the roof.

5. Something surviving from the past, such as might be found in a museum.

6. I.e. by the manager of the newspaper I represented.

7. The cape at the S.W. corner of England.

8. A marvel, almost supernatural.

9. Not actually fatal.

10. Disabled my right arm (a military metaphor).
11. A slang word for "one supposed to bring bad luck".
12. A town in the north of France.
13. A conveyance for the sick and the wounded.
14. Allowing for both their advantages and their disadvantages.
15. A cheap entertainment consisting of recitations, &c.
16. For the purpose of reporting the affair in my newspaper.
17. A broad carriage road leading up to a large house.
18. So great as almost to cause a shock (of apoplexy).
19. One who interferes with other people's amusement.
20. A policeman such as usually appears in such circumstances.
21. The uneducated Londoner (Cockney) drops the "h" at the beginning of a word.
22. Though not provided with quotation marks, these are the remarks the people made.
23. Ironical.
24. Actors posing as . . .
25. On the English stage, comic characters are frequently represented with red noses to suggest that they are drunkards.
26. A metaphor from hunting. "Induced to take a wrong road by being given wrong directions."
27. A tramp is a beggar who moves from place to place. In the play this part was taken by comic actors.
28. An English county south of the river Thames.
29. Freely wandering about.
30. Here an expression of somewhat contemptuous admiration.
31. Since he was the clergyman of the parish, all marriages in the parish church were performed by him.
32. An actor, posing as a clergyman, who had concealed himself behind a hedge while putting on the clerical dress.
33. Performing the marriage ceremony.
34. Full of pretended piety.
35. Read the rest of the paragraph, and then explain these two phrases.
36. In the Greek myth Icarus, with wings made for him by his father Dædalus, tried to fly across the Ægean Sea (between Asia Minor and Greece). He flew too near the sun; the wax that fastened his wings to his body melted, and he was drowned.
37. In imagination tried to follow every movement of the flying kite, so as to understand the principles involved.
38. In Yorkshire, in the N.E. of England.
39. Homer's *Iliad* tells how Achilles, the Greek warrior, being enraged at his commander-in-chief, Agamemnon, sulked (i.e. remained in gloomy anger) in his tent, and refused to take any further



part in the siege of Troy. Here it means "were cross and refused to fly".

40. Entry money, taken at the gate.

41. Long pieces of wood or metal, inserted in a frame-work to strengthen it.

42. Extent.

43. The famous London church in which so many of Britain's most famous men are buried. The point of the comparison is the huge size of the Church.

44. In the old Jewish story, the people and animals who were saved from the great Deluge escaped in a kind of floating house, called an "ark", built by the pious Noah at God's command.

45. The stage name of a showman whose real name was Colonel Cody. He was an expert horseman, and used to give exhibitions of lassoing (i.e. catching with a rope that had a noose) wild buffaloes.

46. A grammatical mistake. It should be "when".

47. Drooped.

48. Came down with the front part of the machine pointing towards the ground.

49. A partial guide.

50. The house of the parish clergyman (called the rector or vicar).

51. They did all the unusual things that the occasion required.

### QUESTIONS

1. Do you enjoy a journey more by motor-bus or by railway train? Give reasons for your answer.

2. What changes have cinemas introduced in the life of Indian city-dwellers?

3. Using your imagination, describe the cinema-play which Philip Gibbs saw acted.

4. Fully explain what the author means by saying that "humanity rose very high, and fell very low when it discovered at last the secret of flight".

5. How would you like to be a journalist?

## Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

"The Striped Chest", from *The Green Flag*, is one of the short stories of Sir A. Conan Doyle, who died in 1930. Probably he will always be best known as the inventor of the famous detective, Sherlock Holmes. He wrote some very fine historical novels; and was a master in the realm of thrilling stories of war, sport, and adventure.

### THE STRIPED CHEST

[In the first paragraphs of the story, which are not given here, a ship's captain tells how once, after a storm, he saw in the distance a brig, or small sailing-vessel, which had suffered badly in the storm and seemed to have been abandoned. As the brig was on the point of sinking, the captain decided to take a boat and go with four of his men to search her, in case there might be living men or valuable cargo on board.]

It was but a little distance, but it took some time to traverse, and so heavy was the roll,<sup>1</sup> that often, when we were in the trough <sup>2</sup> of the sea, we could not see either the barque <sup>3</sup> which we had left or the brig which we were approaching. The sinking sun did not penetrate down there, and it was cold and dark in the hollows of <sup>4</sup> the waves, but each passing billow heaved us up into the warmth and sunshine once more. At each of these moments, as we hung upon a white-capped ridge <sup>5</sup> between the two dark valleys,<sup>6</sup> I caught a glimpse of the long, pea-green line, and the nodding <sup>7</sup> foremast <sup>8</sup> of the brig, and I steered so as to come round by her stern, so that we might determine which was the best way of boarding <sup>9</sup> her. As we passed her we saw the name *Nossa*

*Sehnora da Vittoria*<sup>10</sup> painted across her dripping counter.<sup>11</sup>

"The weather side,<sup>12</sup> sir," said the second mate.<sup>13</sup> "Stand by<sup>14</sup> with the boathook,<sup>15</sup> carpenter!" An instant later we had jumped over the bulwarks,<sup>16</sup> which were hardly higher than our boat, and found ourselves upon the deck of the abandoned vessel.

Our first thought was to provide for our own safety in case—as seemed very probable—the vessel should settle down<sup>17</sup> beneath our feet. With this object two of our men held on to the painter<sup>18</sup> of the boat, and fended<sup>19</sup> her off from the vessel's side, so that she might be ready in case we had to make a hurried retreat. The carpenter was sent to find out how much water there was,<sup>20</sup> and whether it was still gaining,<sup>21</sup> while the other seaman, Allardyce and myself, made a rapid inspection of the vessel and her cargo.

The deck was littered with wreckage and with hen-coops, in which the dead birds were washing about. The boats were gone, with the exception of one, the bottom of which had been stove,<sup>22</sup> and it was certain that the crew had abandoned the vessel. The cabin was in a deck-house, one side of which had been beaten in by a heavy sea.<sup>23</sup> Allardyce and I entered it, and found the captain's table as he had left it, his books and papers—all Spanish or Portuguese—scattered over it with piles of cigarette ash everywhere. I looked about for the log,<sup>24</sup> but could not find it.

"As likely as not he never kept one," said Allardyce. "Things are pretty slack<sup>25</sup> aboard a South American trader,<sup>26</sup> and they don't do more than they can help. If there was one it must have been taken away with him in the boat."

"I should like to take all these books and papers," said I. "Ask the carpenter how much time we have."<sup>27</sup>

His report was reassuring. The vessel was full of water, but some of the cargo was buoyant, and there was no immediate danger of her sinking. Probably she would never sink, but would drift about as one of those terrible, unmarked

reefs<sup>28</sup> which have sent so many stout<sup>29</sup> vessels to the bottom.

"In that case there is no danger in your going below,<sup>30</sup> Mr. Allardyce," said I. "See what you can make of her,<sup>31</sup> and find out how much of her cargo may be saved. I'll look through these papers while you are gone."

The bills of lading,<sup>32</sup> and some notes and letters which lay upon the desk, sufficed to inform me that the Brazilian brig *Nossa Senhora da Vittoria* had cleared<sup>33</sup> from Bahia<sup>34</sup> a month before. The name of the captain was Texeira, but there was no record as to the number of the crew. She was bound for London, and a glance at the bills of lading was sufficient to show me that we were not likely to profit much in the way of salvage.<sup>35</sup> Her cargo consisted of nuts, ginger, and wood, the latter in the shape of great logs of valuable tropical growths. It was these, no doubt, which had prevented the ill-fated vessel from going to the bottom, but they were of such a size as to make it impossible for us to extract them. Besides these, there were a few fancy goods, such as a number of ornamental birds for millinery purposes,<sup>36</sup> and a hundred cases of preserved fruits. And then as I turned over the papers, I came upon a short note in English, which arrested my attention.

"It is requested," said the note, "that the various old Spanish and Italian curiosities, which came out of the Santarem collection, and which are consigned<sup>37</sup> to Prontfoot and Neuman, of Oxford Street, London, should be put in some place where there may be no danger of these very valuable and unique articles being injured or tampered with. This applies most particularly to the treasure-chest of Don Ramirez di Leyra, which must on no account be placed where anyone can get at it."

The treasure-chest of Don Ramirez! Unique and valuable articles! Here was a chance of salvage after all! I had risen to my feet with the paper in my hand, when my Scotch mate appeared in the doorway.

"I'm thinking<sup>38</sup> all isn't quite as it should be aboard of

this ship, sir," said he. He was a hard-faced man, and yet I could see that he had been startled.

"What's the matter?"

"Murder's the matter, sir. There's a man here with his brains beaten out."

"Killed in the storm?" said I.

"May be so, sir. But I'll be surprised if you think so after you have seen him."

"Where is he, then?"

"This way, sir; here in the main-deck house."<sup>39</sup>

There appeared to have been no accommodation below<sup>40</sup> in the brig, for there was the after-house<sup>41</sup> for the captain, another by the main hatchway<sup>42</sup> with the cook's galley<sup>43</sup> attached to it, and a third in the fore-castle<sup>44</sup> for the men. It was to this middle one that the mate led me. As you entered, the galley, with the litter of tumbled pots and dishes, was upon the right, and upon the left was a small room with two bunks for the officers. Then beyond there was a place about twelve feet square, which was littered with flags and spare canvas. All round the walls were a number of packets done up<sup>45</sup> in coarse cloth and carefully lashed<sup>46</sup> to the woodwork. At the other end was a great box, striped red and white, though the red was so faded and the white so dirty that it was only where the light fell directly upon it that one could see the colouring. The box was, by subsequent<sup>47</sup> measurement, four feet three inches in length, three feet two inches in height, and three feet across—considerably larger than a seaman's chest.<sup>48</sup>

But it was not to the box that my eyes or my thoughts were turned as I entered the store-room. On the floor, lying across the litter of bunting, there was stretched a small, dark man with a short, curling beard. He lay as far as it was possible from the box, with his feet towards it and his head away. A crimson patch was printed<sup>49</sup> upon the white canvas on which his head was resting, and little red ribbons<sup>50</sup> wreathed themselves round his swarthy neck and trailed



away on to the floor, but there was no sign of a wound that I could see, and his face was as placid as that of a sleeping child.

It was only when I stooped that I could perceive his injury, and then I turned away with an exclamation of horror. He had been pole-axed;<sup>51</sup> apparently by some person standing behind him. A frightful blow had smashed in the top of his head and penetrated deeply into his brain. His face might well be placid, for death must have been absolutely instantaneous, and the position of the wound showed that he could never have seen the person who had inflicted it.

"Is that foul play<sup>52</sup> or accident, Captain Barclay?" asked my second mate, demurely.

"You are quite right, Mr. Allardyce. The man has been murdered, struck down from above by a sharp and heavy weapon. But who was he, and why did they murder him?"

"He was a common seaman, sir," said the mate. "You can see that if you look at his fingers." He turned out his pockets as he spoke and brought to light a pack of cards, some tarred string, and a bundle of Brazilian tobacco.

"Hullo, look at this!" said he.

It was a large, open knife with a stiff spring blade which he had picked up from the floor. The steel was shining and bright, so that we could not associate it with the crime, and yet the dead man had apparently held it in his hand when he was struck down, for it still lay within his grasp.

"It looks to me, sir, as if he knew he was in danger, and kept his knife handy,"<sup>53</sup> said the mate. "However, we can't help the poor beggar<sup>54</sup> now. I can't make out these things that are lashed to the wall. They seem to be idols and weapons and curios of all sorts done up in old sacking."

"That's right," said I. "They are the only things of value that we are likely to get from the cargo. Hail<sup>55</sup> the barque and tell them to send the other quarter-boat<sup>56</sup> to help us to get the stuff aboard."

While he was away I examined this curious plunder which

had come into our possession. The curiosities were so wrapped up that I could only form a general idea as to their nature, but the striped box stood in a good light where I could thoroughly examine it.

In one corner was the date 1606, and on the other a large white label, upon which was written in English, "You are earnestly requested, upon no account, to open this box." The same warning was repeated underneath in Spanish. As to the lock, it was a very complex and heavy one of engraved steel, with a Latin motto, which was above a seaman's comprehension.<sup>57</sup>

By the time I had finished this examination of the peculiar box, the other quarter-boat with Mr. Armstrong, the first officer, had come alongside, and we began to carry out and place in her the various curiosities which appeared to be the only objects worth moving from the derelict<sup>58</sup> ship. When she was full I sent her back to the barque, and then Allardyce and I, with the carpenter and one seaman, shifted the striped box, which was the only thing left, to our boat, and lowered it over, balancing it upon the two middle thwarts,<sup>59</sup> for it was so heavy that it would have given the boat a dangerous tilt<sup>60</sup> had we placed it at either end. As to the dead man, we left him where we found him.

The mate had a theory that, at the moment of the desertion of the ship, this fellow had started plundering, and that the captain in an attempt to preserve discipline, had struck him down with a hatchet or some other heavy weapon. It seemed more probable than any other explanation, and yet it did not entirely satisfy me either. But the ocean is full of mysteries, and we were content to leave the fate of the dead seaman of the Brazilian brig to be added to that long list which every sailor can recall.

The heavy box was slung up by ropes on to the deck of the *Mary Sinclair*,<sup>61</sup> and was carried by four seamen into the cabin, where, between the table and the after-lockers,<sup>62</sup> there was just space for it to stand. There it remained during

supper, and after that meal the mates remained with me, and discussed over <sup>63</sup> a glass of grog <sup>64</sup> the event of the day. Mr. Armstrong was a long, thin, vulture-like man, an excellent seaman, but famous for his nearness <sup>65</sup> and cupidity. Our treasure-trove <sup>66</sup> had excited him greatly, and already he had begun with glistening eyes to reckon up how much it might be worth to each of us when the shares of the salvage came to be divided.

"If the paper said that they were unique, Mr. Barclay, then they may be worth anything that you like to name. You wouldn't believe the sums that the rich collectors give. A thousand pounds is nothing to them. We'll have something to show for our voyage, or I am mistaken."

"I don't think that," said I. "As far as I can see they are not very different from any other South American curios."

"Well, sir, I've traded there for fourteen voyages, and I have never seen anything like that chest before. That's worth a pile of money, just as it stands. But it's so heavy, that surely there must be something valuable inside it. Don't you think that we ought to open it and see?"

"If you will break it open you will spoil it, as likely as not," said the second mate.

Armstrong squatted <sup>67</sup> down in front of it, with his head on one side, and his long thin nose within a few inches of the lock.

"The wood is oak," said he, "and it has shrunk a little with age. If I had a chisel or a strong-bladed knife I could force the lock back without doing any damage at all."

The mention of a strong-bladed knife made me think of the dead seaman upon the brig.

"I wonder if he could have been on the job <sup>68</sup> when someone came over to interfere with him," said I.

"I don't know about that, sir, but I am perfectly certain that I could open the box. There's a screwdriver here in the locker <sup>69</sup>. Just hold the lamp, Allardyce, and I'll have it done in a brace of shakes." <sup>70</sup>

"Wait a bit," said I, for already, with eyes which gleamed with curiosity and with avarice, he was stooping over the lid. "I don't see that there is any hurry over this matter. You've read that card which warns us not to open it. It may mean anything or it may mean nothing, but somehow I feel inclined to obey it. After all, whatever is in it will keep,<sup>71</sup> and if it is valuable it will be worth as much if it is opened in the owner's offices as in the cabin of the *Mary Sinclair*."

The first officer seemed bitterly disappointed at my decision.

"Surely, sir, you are not superstitious about it," said he, with a slight sneer upon his thin lips. "If it gets out of our own hands, and we don't see for ourselves what is inside it, we may be done out of our rights; besides——"

"That's enough, Mr. Armstrong," said I abruptly. "You may have every confidence that you will get your rights, but I will not have that box opened to-night."

"Why, the label itself shows that the box has been examined by Europeans," Allardyce added. "Because a box is a treasure-box is no reason that it has treasures inside it now. A good many folk have had a peep into it since the days of the old Governor of Terra Firma."<sup>72</sup>

Armstrong threw the screwdriver down upon the table and shrugged his shoulders.

"Just as you like," said he; but for the rest of the evening, although we spoke upon many subjects, I noticed that his eyes were continually coming round, with the same expression of curiosity and greed, to the old striped box.

And now I come to that portion of my story which fills me even now with a shuddering horror when I think of it. The main cabin had the rooms of the officers round it, but mine was the farthest away from it at the end of the little passage which led to the companion.<sup>73</sup> No regular watch<sup>74</sup> was kept<sup>75</sup> by me, except in cases of emergency, and the three mates divided the watches among them. Armstrong had the middle watch, which ends at four in the morning, and

he was relieved <sup>76</sup> by Allardyce. For my part I have always been one of the soundest of sleepers, and it is rare for anything less than a hand upon my shoulder to arouse me.

And yet I was aroused that night, or rather in the early grey of the morning. It was just half-past four by my chronometer <sup>77</sup> when something caused me to sit up in my berth wide awake and with every nerve tingling. It was a sound of some sort, a crash with a human cry at the end of it, which still jarred <sup>78</sup> upon my ears. I sat listening, but all was now silent. And yet it could not have been imagination, that hideous cry, for the echo of it still rang in my head, and it seemed to have come from some place quite close to me. I sprang from my bunk, and, pulling on some clothes, I made my way into the cabin.

At first I saw nothing unusual there. In the cold grey light I made out the red-clothed table, the six rotating <sup>79</sup> chairs, the walnut lockers, the swinging barometer, and there, at the end, the big striped chest. I was turning away with the intention of going upon deck and asking the second mate if he had heard anything, when my eyes fell suddenly upon something which projected from under the table.

It was the leg of a man—a leg with a long sea-boot upon it. I stooped, and there was a figure sprawling <sup>80</sup> upon his face, his arms thrown forward and his body twisted. One glance told me that it was Armstrong, the first officer, and a second that he was a dead man. For a few moments I stood gasping. Then I rushed on to the deck, called Allardyce to my assistance, and came back with him into the cabin.

Together we pulled the unfortunate fellow from under the table, and as we looked at his dripping head we exchanged glances, and I do not know which was the paler of the two.

"The same as the Spanish sailor," said I.

"The very same. God preserve us! It's that infernal <sup>81</sup> chest! Look at Armstrong's hand."



He held up the mate's right hand, and there was the screw-driver which he had wished to use the night before.

"He's been at <sup>82</sup> the chest, sir. He knew that I was on deck and you asleep. He knelt down in front of it, and he pushed the lock back with that tool. Then something happened to him, and he cried out so that you heard him."

"Allardyce," I whispered, "what *could* have happened to him?"

The second mate put his hand upon my sleeve and drew me into his cabin.

"We can talk here, sir, and we don't know who may be listening to us in there. What do you suppose is in that box, Captain Barclay?"

"I give you my word, Allardyce, that I have no idea."

"Well, I can only find one theory which will fit all the facts. Look at the size of the box. Look at all the carving and metal-work which may conceal any number of holes. Look at the weight of it; it took four men to carry it. On the top of that, <sup>83</sup> remember that two men have tried to open it, and both have come to their end through it. Now, sir, what can it mean, except one thing?"

"You mean there is a man in it?"

"Of course there is a man in it. You know how it is <sup>84</sup> in these South American states, sir. A man may be President one week, and hunted like a dog the next. They are for ever flying for their lives. <sup>85</sup> My idea is that there is some fellow in hiding there, who is armed and desperate, and who will fight to the death before he is taken."

"But his food and drink?"

"It's a roomy <sup>86</sup> chest, sir, and he may have some provisions stowed away. As to his drink, he had a friend among the crew upon the brig who saw <sup>87</sup> that he had what he needed."

"You think, then, that the label asking people not to open the box was simply written in his interest?"

"Yes, sir, that is my idea. Have you any other way of explaining the facts?"

I had to confess that I had not.

"The question is what are we to do?" I asked.

"The man's a dangerous ruffian who sticks at nothing.<sup>88</sup> I'm thinking it wouldn't be a bad thing to put a rope round the chest and tow it alongside for half an hour; then we could open it at our ease. Or if we just tied the box up and kept him from getting any water, may be that would do as well. Or the carpenter could put a coat of varnish over it and stop<sup>89</sup> all the blow-holes."<sup>90</sup>

"Come, Allardyce," said I angrily. "You don't seriously mean to say that a whole ship's company are going to be terrorized by a single man in a box. If he's there, I'll engage<sup>91</sup> to fetch him out!" I went to my room and came back with my revolver in my hand. "Now, Allardyce," said I. "Do you open the lock, and I'll stand on guard."

"For God's sake, think what you are doing, sir!" cried the mate. "Two men lost their lives over it, and the blood of one not yet dry upon the carpet."

"The more reason why we should revenge him."

"Well, sir, at least let me call the carpenter. Three are better than two, and he is a good stout<sup>92</sup> man."

He went off in search of him, and I was left alone with the striped chest in the cabin. I don't think that I'm a nervous man, but I kept the table between me and this solid relic of the Spanish Main.<sup>93</sup> In the growing light of morning the red and white striping was beginning to appear, and the curious scrolls and wreaths of metal and carving which showed the loving pains that cunning<sup>94</sup> craftsmen had expended upon it. Presently the carpenter and the mate came back together, the former with a hammer in his hand.

"It's a bad business this, sir," said he, shaking his head, as he looked at the body of the mate. "And you think there's someone hiding in the box."

"There's no doubt about it," said Allardyce, picking up the screwdriver and setting his jaw like a man who needs to brace<sup>95</sup> his courage. "I'll drive the lock back if you

both stand by. If he rises let him have it <sup>96</sup> on the head with your hammer, carpenter! Shoot at once, sir, if he raises his hand. Now!"

He had knelt down in front of the striped chest, and passed the blade of the tool under the lid. With a sharp snick <sup>97</sup> the lock flew back. "Stand by!" yelled the mate, and with a heave he threw open the massive top of the box. As it swung up, we all three sprang back, I with my pistol levelled, and the carpenter with the hammer above his head. Then, as nothing happened, we each took a step forward and peeped in. The box was empty.

Not quite empty either, for in one corner was lying an old yellow candlestick, elaborately engraved, which appeared to be as old as the box itself. Its rich yellow tone and artistic shape suggested that it was an object of value. For the rest there was nothing more weighty or valuable than dust in the old striped treasure-chest.

"Well, I'm blessed!" <sup>98</sup> said Allardyce, staring blankly into it. "Where does the weight come in, <sup>99</sup> then?"

"Look at the thickness of the sides and look at the lid. Why, it's five inches through. And see that great metal spring across it."

"That's for holding the lid up," said the mate. "You see, it won't lean back. What's that German printing on the inside?"

"It means that it was made by Johann Rothstein of Augsburg, in 1606."

"And a solid bit of work, too. But it doesn't throw much light on what has passed, does it, Captain Barclay?" That candlestick looks like gold. We shall have something for our trouble after all."

He leant forward to grasp it, and from that moment I have never doubted as to the reality of inspiration,<sup>100</sup> for on the instant I caught him by the collar and pulled him straight again. It may have been some story of the Middle Ages which had come back to my mind, or it may have been

that my eye had caught some red which was not that of rust upon the upper part of the lock, but to him and to me it will always seem an inspiration, so prompt and sudden was my action.

"There's devilry here," said I. "Give me the crooked stick from the corner."

It was an ordinary walking-cane with a hooked top. I passed it over the candlestick and gave it a pull. With a flash a row of polished steel fangs shot out from below the upper lip, and the great striped chest snapped at us like a wild animal. Clang came the huge lid into its place, and the glasses on the swinging rack<sup>101</sup> sang and tingled with the shock. The mate sat down on the edge of the table and shivered like a frightened horse.

"You've saved my life, Captain Barclay!" said he.

So this was the secret of the striped treasure-chest of old Don Ramirez di Leyra, and this was how he preserved his ill-gotten gains from the Terra Firma and the Province of Veraquas. Be the thief ever so cunning he could not tell that golden candlestick from the other articles of value, and the instant that he laid hand upon it the terrible spring was unloosed and the murderous steel spikes were driven into his brain, while the shock of the blow sent the victim backwards and enabled the chest to automatically close itself. How many, I wondered, had fallen victims to the ingenuity of the Mechanic of Augsburg. And as I thought of the possible history of that grim striped chest my resolution was very quickly taken.

"Carpenter, bring three men and carry this on deck."

"Going to throw it overboard, sir?"

"Yes, Mr. Allardyce. I'm not superstitious as a rule, but there are some things which are more than a sailor can be called upon to stand."

"No wonder that brig made heavy weather.<sup>102</sup> Captain Barclay, with such a thing on board. The glass<sup>103</sup> is dropping fast, sir, and we are only just in time."

So we did not even wait for the three sailors, but we carried it out, the mate, the carpenter, and I, and we pushed it with our own hands over the bulwarks. There was a white spout <sup>104</sup> of water, and it was gone. There it lies, the striped chest, a thousand fathoms <sup>105</sup> deep, and if, as they say, the sea will some day be dry land, I grieve for the man who finds that old box and tries to penetrate into its secret.

## NOTES

1. Rolling (of the sea).
2. Hollow between two waves.
3. Large vessel with three masts (often spelt "bark").
4. Between.
5. The top of a wave, covered with white foam.
6. The hollows on each side of the wave, dark because concealed from the sunlight.
7. Moving backwards and forwards, like a person half-asleep, as the ship was tossed by the waves.
8. A brig had two masts: the foremast in front and the mainmast.
9. Going on board.
10. Portuguese for "Our Lady of Vittoria".
11. The curved part of the stern (hinder part) of a ship.
12. Go to that side towards which the wind is blowing. (The sheltered side is the "lee" side.)
13. Sea-going ships have two or more officers, or mates, in addition to the captain.
14. Remain near and in readiness.
15. A long pole, with a hook attached, enabling a sailor to fasten his boat to another boat.
16. Sides of the brig.
17. Gradually sink.
18. Rope used for fastening a ship's boat to the ship.
19. Kept.
20. To measure the depth of the water in the sinking brig. (They knew roughly what depth of water would sink her.)
21. Increasing.
22. Crushed in.
23. Particularly large wave.
24. The book that contains the official history of the voyage, written from day to day.
25. There is little discipline; there is much carelessness.



26. Trading vessel.
27. How long it will be before the ship sinks.
28. Every dangerous rock is marked on the sea-charts; but an abandoned vessel which floats is just as dangerous as a rock, yet it cannot be marked in any chart.
29. Strong; well-built.
30. Down into the "hold" where the cargo is kept.
31. How much information you can gather about her.
32. Official document giving details of the cargo carried.
33. Had satisfied the port-officer that everything was in order and received permission to depart.
34. In Brazil.
35. Money obtained as a reward for saving a ship or its cargo at sea.
36. For ornamenting ladies' hats.
37. Marked as to be delivered (to).
38. Scottish for "I think" or "I suspect".
39. A room in the main or principal deck or storey of the brig.
40. In the lower part of the ship.
41. Cabin in the rear of the ship.
42. Trap-door.
43. Kitchen (sailor's word).
44. The forward part of the ship where are the quarters of the common sailors.
45. Tied up.
46. Securely fastened.
47. Made afterwards.
48. The chest or box in which a sailor keeps his clothes.
49. A metaphor.
50. Streams of blood like ribbons.
51. Felled with a weapon like a battle-axe or butcher's axe.
52. The work of a criminal.
53. Ready.
54. A term of pity (colloquial).
55. Shout or make signals to call the attention of (the people on their own bark).
56. One of the rowing-boats carried by every ship, to enable the sailors to go to and from the land when in port.
57. Too difficult for a common sailor to understand.
58. Abandoned.
59. Seats in a rowing-boat (so called because they run "athwart" or across the boat).
60. Sloping position (on account of the weight of the box).
61. The name of the bark. (Ships are often named after ladies.)

62. Cupboards in the rear.
63. While drinking.
64. Whisky and water.
65. A polite word for miserliness.
66. A technical term for treasure found (usually in the earth).
67. Crouched.
68. A slang phrase: "engaged in the business" (here the business of rifling the box).
69. See 62.
70. Slang: the time it would take to shake something twice (two moments). A brace is a couple.
71. Will not get spoiled.
72. Literally "solid land" or "continent". Here it means either Colombia (in South America) or the Isthmus of Panama.
73. Stair leading from the deck to the lower part of the ship.
74. Period when a sailor is on duty (usually four hours).
75. That is, I did not regularly take a turn of acting as officer of a "watch".
76. That is, Allardyce took over charge from him.
77. Unusually accurate watch.
78. Made an unpleasant impression upon.
79. Revolving.
80. Lying spread out.
81. Accursed.
82. Been trying to open.
83. In addition to that.
84. The condition of things.
85. To try to save their lives.
86. Large and spacious.
87. Took care.
88. Hesitates at no crime.
89. Close.
90. Holes through which air can enter.
91. Undertake.
92. Strong and sturdy.
93. Spanish-American Sea. (Spanish influence is still very strong in South America.)
94. Skilled.
95. Strengthen.
96. Colloquial. "Strike him."
97. An onomatopoeic word.
98. Colloquial; an exclamation of surprise.
99. How does it come to be so heavy?
100. A sudden suggestion direct from God.

- 101. Shelf suspended from the roof.
- 102. Found the weather stormy. (Sailors are very superstitious.)
- 103. Barometer. A low barometer indicates bad weather.
- 104. Splash.
- 105. A fathom is six feet.

### QUESTIONS

- 1. Tell the story of the Striped Chest as it might have been told by Mr. Armstrong from the time he first saw it till just before his death.
- 2. What features in stories of this kind make people so fond of them?
- 3. What ideas of a sailor's life do you gather from this story?
- 4. The stories that made Conan Doyle famous begin with a mysterious occurrence. A detective is called in to explain the mystery. He very carefully examines every clue, even the minutest, and so finds out the truth. Is that the method adopted in this story?
- 5. Do the authors mean to suggest that Mr. Armstrong in "The Striped Chest" and the two sailors in "The Treasure in the Forest" were justly punished?

## SOME HINTS FOR ANSWERING EXAMINATION PAPERS

1. Before you begin to write, read the instructions carefully. Note how many questions you are expected to answer, whether any questions are compulsory, and whether any other instructions are given.

2. Before you begin to write, calculate how much time you have to give to each question, and try to keep within that time. If the marks assigned to each question are stated, this will give you some idea how much importance the examiner attaches to each question. Do not waste the bulk of your time on unimportant questions. Always leave time to revise your answers.

3. Be neat, tidy, and accurate in all your work. An examiner gets a favourable, or an unfavourable, impression of a candidate from the general appearance of his answer-paper.

4. Always make quite clear which question, and which part of the question, you are answering. Do not leave the examiner to find this out for himself.

5. An examiner is usually a very busy man. Do not make his work more difficult, as for example: (a) by bad writing; (b) by writing with a very fine point, or with very poor ink, so that your writing can hardly be seen; (c) by leaving almost no space between the lines; or (d) by leaving so much space between the lines that many pages have to be turned over in correcting the answer to a single question.

6. Make sure that, in writing an essay, you copy down the title correctly. If the subject is: "A Voyage to the North Pole", do not write: "Voyage to North Pole". There are two mistakes in this, which make a bad beginning. In the title begin every word with a capital letter, except prepositions, conjunctions, and articles.

7. Few things give an examiner so bad an impression of a candidate as bad spelling. Students are usually very careless about the spelling especially of proper names. Bad spelling is particularly objectionable.

when the word mis-spelt by the student is spelt correctly in the examination paper. Also, if you spell the same word in different ways, you may be sure that all your attempts, with one possible exception, are wrong.

8. Begin every sentence with a capital letter. An astonishing number of students do not do this. It would seem that, in many cases, they have never been shown how to make capital letters. If you find that your capital letters are exactly like your small letters, then you may be sure they are wrongly formed.

9. Many students write down the first form of words that comes into their minds, and never ask themselves whether this conveys exactly the meaning they wish to convey, and whether it conveys that meaning in the best possible manner. There is a right way and a wrong way of saying almost anything. It is worth while to spend a little time in finding the right way.

10. Students frequently waste a great deal both of their own time and of the examiner's, in answering questions that have not been asked. If they are invited to "write notes on the words underlined in the following paragraph", it is surprising how many explain the whole paragraph. In many cases they leave the examiner to find out which parts of their explanation contain the answers to the question asked. This the examiner may or may not take the trouble to do.

11. A "summary" of a passage should contain only the essential points of the passage. It will therefore always be shorter, and usually much shorter, than the original passage. If you find that your "summary" is two or three times as long as the passage summarized, you may be sure it is a very bad summary.

12. Distinguish between "a paraphrase" of a passage (in which you bring out the full meaning of the passage in simple language), "the substance" of a passage (in which you bring out only the main points), and "a summary" of a passage which should contain only the essential points.

13. In reproducing the meaning of a paragraph or article, whether in the form of a paraphrase, the substance, or a summary, always do so in the simplest way. If you begin with the words: "The author says that . . ." then, strictly speaking, all the rest of your answer must be in indirect speech. This adds to the difficulty of your work and greatly increases the likelihood of grammatical mistakes. Simply give your statement, with no introduction. The examiner will know that you are trying to state what the author says.

Similarly, if the passage in question is written in the first person, reproduce it in the first person, unless you are specially asked to turn it into indirect speech. Never introduce needless difficulties into your answers.



14. If you are asked to "annotate" (i.e. write notes on) a passage, you must use your common sense in finding what words or phrases require notes, and what kind of notes is required. Sometimes a difficult word or phrase has to be explained; sometimes an unusual grammatical form or construction has to be noted; sometimes an historical or geographical reference has to be given.

The student's task is easier when the particular words or phrases to be annotated are mentioned, and especially where only "explanatory" notes are asked for.

15. Opinions differ about the way in which the "context" of a passage should be indicated. It seems best to state the name of the book from which the passage is taken, with the author's name, and then to show quite briefly the place which the passage in question occupies in the book. For example, if the book is a novel, the context can be indicated by explaining at what point in the story the given passage comes.

If the context has to be given of several passages all from the same book, the connexion of each with the rest of the book may be shown at somewhat greater length; but not more than two or three sentences should ever be required, and usually the context can be satisfactorily indicated in one sentence.

16. Never use words of whose meaning you are not sure. For example, one very rarely finds an Indian using the word "several" correctly. Schoolboys should avoid the word.

17. If you have not space to finish the last word in a line, be careful how you split it. Always make the division at the end of a syllable; never by any chance in the middle. Thus, if the word is "scarlet", do not write "sc-" in one line, and "arlet" in the next. "Sc" is not a syllable.

When you split a word, put only one hyphen, and that after the first part of the word at the end of the line. A curious habit has arisen lately, of putting a second hyphen before the second part of the word at the beginning of the next line. This is always wrong. A hyphen should never come at the beginning of the line.

18. In a serious composition, such as the answer to an examination question in English is supposed to be, never use contractions (not even the sign "&"); never use figures (except for dates) but write out all numbers; and never use the Latin contraction "etc." which is frequently employed only to cover ignorance.

19. It is difficult for schoolboys to learn all the rules of English punctuation; but even schoolboys should be able to make free use of the full stop, the comma, the semi-colon, quotation marks, and the question mark. Wherever there is a decided break in the sense, and one would naturally stop in reading, there should be a

punctuation mark of some kind. Inattention to this rule spoils many examination papers.

20. In giving the meaning of a word or phrase, be careful to see that your grammar is correct. Do not say that "floes" are "a mass of floating ice". "Floes" is plural; "mass" is singular. In the sentence "he doted on flowers", do not say that "doted on" means "to love passionately". It means "loved passionately".